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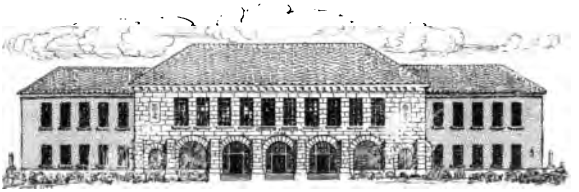

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History Primers.

MEDIÆVAL CIVILIZATION

BY

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THIRD EDITION, REVISED

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LELAND STANFORD JUNIOR UNIVERSITY

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W. P. 4

PREFACE.

THE writer would lay claim to no especial originality in the following sketch. It is believed that the best authorities have been followed in the statement of facts. Those familiar with the literature of the subject will recognize the sources which have been drawn upon, and will also recognize anything that may be new in the presentation of the facts or of their relations.

Two things have been kept in view in the writing as of primary importance: one to present a systematic view of the period, to give a clear conception of its part in the long and constant progress of the race; the other to furnish such an outline as may serve for an introduction to more detailed study, and for a brief review after such study has been completed—the two most important uses of a primer.

DRURY COLLEGE, SPRINGFIELD, MO.,
April, 1883.

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HISTORY PRIMERS.

MEDIÆVAL CIVILIZATION.

INTRODUCTION.

THE history of civilization properly begins with the first human act. The earliest steps which were taken by the race in the long process of lifting itself to its present level were very likely more difficult and important than any it has since taken. It has been well said, no doubt, that the discoveries of the arts of kindling a fire and of raising wheat have been of more value to civilization than any since made.

But the history of these first steps can not be written. In the very nature of the case no record of them was possible at the time when they were taken, and such traditional accounts as may have been preserved in mythologies and legendary lore are too vague to be of much value. No doubt the frontier of the known will in the future be carried much farther back into the now unknown, but, beyond question, a history of human progress must always begin at a point where the race is already in possession of large gains in civilization.

We have chosen to present in this sketch the history of civilization during the middle ages, a period which, forming as it does principally a transition period between ancient and modern history, contains within itself the results of the old and the beginnings of the new. We begin our work at the fall of the Western Roman empire, not because that date forms a real beginning of progress, or makes anything more than an artificial division, but because it is the point where all the main forces of our present civilization are at last together on the stage, and thus affords, in such a concise essay as this, the best ground from which to survey briefly the past and to set out upon the new development. We close with the era of the Reformation, because that event clearly brings the period of the middle ages to a close—making with this beginning and ending a period which is distinct and separate in itself, so far as it is possible for any period to be distinct and separate in the unbroken line of human development.

We can not trace the direct line of our progress farther toward its origin than the eastern and southern shores of the Mediterranean. There the stream emerges from the darkness, and thence it flows into Greece. It remains from this time on essentially European, though at many places smaller and larger streams of Asiatic influence join the current, and though we may suspect considerable additions at points where we can not accurately trace the union. Greece took up such of the results of

Egyptian and Phœnician progress as she had learned, and added to them the wonderful products of her own passionate thinking and taught the whole to Rome, her successor in the line. For, in the line of historic progress, Rome is rightly to be called the successor of Greece, although much of her real work had been taking its shape before she felt Grecian influence, and in a large part of her most important work Greece had no share. Rome added her magnificent system of law and government, and, by welding the whole civilized world into one, prepared a common working ground for the two giant forces which were coming. The one of these, from its humble beginning at Jerusalem, attacked and conquered the Roman empire and turned it into an imperial church. The other brought from the forests of Germany the fresh vigor of a youthful race, the blood and the brains that were to do the largest share of the world's real work from that day to this.

From these four sources—Greece, Rome, Christianity, and the Germans—are derived the principal elements of our modern civilization. Whatever results the classic world had gained in material civilization, in wealth, and skill; in literature, philosophy, and art; in ideas wrought into the common thinking; in organization and practice—whatever of these and other results might survive the period of ruin that was coming, passed over into the new civilization. Along with these came the new ideas of God and religion; of duty and morality; of the individual and his rights; new beliefs and sentiments; new

practices in government; new energy and vital power, derived from Christianity and the Germans. From the mingling together of all these has come the common civilization of Christendom.

We begin our sketch, then, with the fall of the Western Roman empire. What the surrendering of this name and title was supposed by the men of those days to mean we shall see hereafter. What it really did mean was that the old forces which had brought civilization up to this point were now too weak to carry it further, and that new forces were at hand ready to take up the labor with fresh energy and to work out higher results.

In beginning so brief a study of such a wide period and such varied movements, let us be very careful to keep in mind the elementary truth that historic forces are complex in their action, that no historic event is produced by a single cause working simply and alone. And so, although we may pick out separate lines of progress for convenience of study and clearness of understanding, let us remember that these lines continually act and react upon and modify one another; that they are, indeed, no more than separate threads, whose weaving together only can make the complete pattern.

Let us remember, also, that in the study of history we can acquire no more useful mental habit than that of divesting ourselves of all the acquired knowledge, the deeper insight, and the broader views which advancing civilization has brought us, and of putting ourselves, as exactly as possible, in

the position of the men of other days. If we would truly understand why men acted as they did, or believed as they did, in some great crisis of the past, we must try to look at the matter then in question as they looked at it, knowing no more than they did, swayed by the passions and prejudices they were liable to, limited in all ways as they were. In this way only can we thoroughly understand them. The ability to do this may not be easily gained, but until it is gained, in some degree at least, we shall only be guessing wildly at the riddles of history.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE PERIOD.

As we look forward from the fall of the Western Roman empire there lies before us a period of a thousand years—more than a third of Europe's recorded history. What kind of a period is it? What is its place in the line of human history? What is its relation to the ages that go before, and to the ages that follow? For it can not be an isolated period—one standing alone, with no dependence on the past, no influence on the future. There is no such solitary period to be found in history. History is one continuous succession, one unbroken progress. However completely at any moment the present may seem to have broken with the past, however utterly it may seem to have abandoned or

destroyed the work which the past has done, it has done so in appearance rather than in reality. After a time the dropped threads are picked up again; the old work goes on; the unfinished pattern begins to grow again under the weaver's hand. If, then, we can answer the questions we have asked, satisfactorily, if we can gain a true conception of this period as a whole, then we can descend into the details of its history with some confidence that we may understand them, and find them not confused, but well ordered and systematic.

Its most essential character is that of a long transition period. It is not, principally, an age of production, but an age of preparation. The work which dropped from the hands of failing antiquity is not taken up by new hands, in the way of actual advancement, till these thousand years are over.

By this it is not meant to say that these ages produced nothing. Too many witnesses may be summoned, even to-day, who can testify to the productiveness of the middle ages in certain directions. It is not meant that they are barren, or unworthy of study, or that in them humanity stood still. It is meant that in them humanity took no great steps in advance; that men possessed but few more of the actual results of civilization at the end of the fourteenth than at the end of the fourth century. Along certain lines progress was made, as we shall see. As we approach the end of the period, we shall see successful attempts at advance becoming more and more frequent. But the great work of the middle ages was not production. It

was to form out of all the diverse elements which existed in Europe a new, compact, organic whole, in which a more rapid and more perfect progress might take place than could ever have been possible among fragments mutually hostile and exclusive. Had the great nations of Europe grown up without common bonds of sympathy, without common ideas and sentiments, without the ability readily to understand each other, and to pass from one to another, without delay, their work along the various lines of civilization, we had been to-day many centuries below our present vantage-ground.

The formation of this common system was the work of the middle ages—the unifying of an immense variety of elements, the assimilating of old and new, the formation of a Christendom. By the force of certain ideas and of certain institutions in which those ideas were embodied, the scattered fragments were artificially held together, as it were, until a natural and organic unity could begin to arise. The process is not yet completed, as we may readily see, and its incompleteness has cost us much in the past and is costing us much to-day, but it was centuries ago complete enough for a united working at the problems of civilization.

These ages have been called the dark ages, and the name has been often used as one of reproach, as if these centuries or the history itself, apart from the actors in it, were in some way blameworthy. And there is a very common idea that it is a dismal and unprofitable portion of history, which it is best to get over as quickly as possible, and of which every

one, except the student of historical morbid anatomy, can afford to be ignorant. But given the condition of things at the end of the fifth century, and how could the following ages have been otherwise than dark? How could they have been otherwise than full of tumult and confusion?

Nature here furnishes us with a suggestive analogy. Pour together an acid and a carbonate, and effervescence follows. While the old compounds are breaking up and the new ones are forming, there is a moment of apparent tumult and confusion. So in the middle ages the elements of civilization, coming from so many different sources, are thrown together. While the old is falling to pieces and the new is beginning to form, while these diverse and foreign elements are uniting into a new system of things, there is a period of disorder and turbulence. Anarchy and insecurity are everywhere. Might gives the title to possession. Neither states nor nations have any existence. The local and temporary are superior to the general and permanent. Here and there we see men and peoples making able and heroic attempts to gain a permanent security, to form nations. We see all these attempts fail till we approach the close of the middle ages, and we see how in the circumstances of the time they must have failed; but they are enough to show us that the unfavorable conditions of the middle ages could be only temporary, the conditions of a transition period.

These ages are dark ages—that is, they are ignorant and superstitious ages, and could they well have been otherwise? The torch of knowledge which

antiquity had kindled had fallen from the hands that held it, and burned but feebly on the ground. The new comers were ignorant barbarians. A pure Christianity, could it have been maintained, might have furnished the conditions of progress in knowledge. But Christianity had fallen into the hands of ignorant, and, worse still, into the hands of selfish men, and though its true light continued to shine from century to century, yet it shone but dimly, and in its proper place men had set up a misleading *ignis-fatuus*. But the light of true knowledge was never wholly quenched. It even grew by degrees brighter and brighter during these so-called dark ages. At the very earliest opportunity of security and quiet, under Charlemagne, steps are taken toward regaining what has been lost, civilizing influences are set in motion whose effects never entirely cease, and, as we approach the sixteenth century, the light of true knowledge and the light of true religion begin to arise together and to disperse the darkness.

No one will have any difficulty in understanding the character of the middle ages who can imagine the character of the period which would follow the conquest of Europe, in its present condition, by a race of savages—a race of savages in reality, but having an immense capacity for civilization. They would become the owners of the soil, and the government would be in their hands. They would bring with them ideas and institutions of their own in the germ, and along with the development of these they would absorb and develop those of the

subject Europeans, until rulers and subjects should grow into one people, or into a number of similar peoples, having similar ideas and institutions. It would, of course, be a period of much anarchy, of government by the strongest, of crime and violence, of temporary expedients and attempts that would fail, of confused and ignorant thinking and wild superstition, of much apparent loss of what had been previously gained, but, with the very beginning, the process of union, the progress toward order, the slow winning back of what had been lost, would begin also, and would keep on steadily though slowly, and with many local and temporary interruptions. Such an imaginary picture would not be greatly untrue to the character of the period we are to study.

CHAPTER II.

THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE.

SUCH was the character of the middle ages. It was the period when all the diverse elements of ancient civilization, pouring from so many sources into the arena which Rome had made, and standing face to face with each other for a while as strangers and enemies, were at last wrought together into one consistent whole—that virtual federation of nations which we to-day call Christendom, and which is a condition of things that was wholly unknown to the ancient world.

In the old days, to the Greek, every non-Greek

was a Barbarian; to the Roman, every stranger was an enemy. Every state surrounded itself with iron, and the only relation of union with any neighboring state in which it could imagine itself standing was that of a victorious or a vanquished enemy. The only general union possible was one like that created by Rome—a universal empire, into which all nations are absorbed. A moment's thought will show how widely different this is from our modern Christendom — diversity in unity. The work of changing from the one to the other is the work of the middle ages. The Roman empire is violently destroyed. For a moment, a renewal of the earlier condition of things, with its mutually exclusive and hostile states, seems likely. But the world was to be saved from that, and the end of the middle ages sees the saving accomplished. Slowly and gradually order is evolved from chaos, and our modern system arises.

But, if this end was to be gained, if all these discordant and warring forces, which seemed about to tear society into fragments, were finally to be made to live together in harmony and to work toward common ends, there must be, even at the beginning, in the midst of them, forces of union strong enough to prevent an actual disruption of society, however near that disruption might seem to be, and strong enough to hold the fragments of the Roman empire together, in an artificial union, till a more natural one might be formed. And there were at hand, at the very start, as produced by the earlier civilization, two such forces to preside over and

guide this process—two forces to which the creation of a Christian commonwealth of nations has been largely due. One of these was what we may now call the Holy Roman empire, although the adjective "Holy" was not added to the title till a later time; the other was the Roman Church.

The first of these, the Holy Roman empire, was an idea, a sentiment, a belief, the product of memory and imagination, but it exercised as strong a control over the men of those generations as the most stubborn of facts could have done. The other, the Roman Church, was a great institution—an institution founded in part upon this same belief, but itself a real power, which, from one center, stretched out a thousand lines through all the lands of Europe, binding them together and to itself. The one would persuade all men to believe themselves members of a world-wide unity; the other created a real unity, which it constantly strove to render more perfect, and which it protected with fire and sword against every attempted disruption. Both these exerted their most effectual influence during the earlier part of this period, when that influence was most necessary, and both of them, though growing more perfect in theory toward the latter part of the period, found that theory less and less realized in facts.

It is no easy matter for us, living in so practical a time and one that is so little ruled by imagination, to understand how it was that long centuries could be so dominated by a mere idea, or to put ourselves

into the place of the men who really believed in the existence of the Roman empire centuries after all Roman rule had disappeared. But it is only after we have succeeded in doing this that we can come to understand one of the most important forces of mediæval times. Perhaps we shall make this idea easier to understand by a brief outline of its beginning and growth.

The idea embodied in the theory of the Holy Roman empire grew, naturally enough, out of the idea of the sublime destiny ordained for Rome which the later Romans held—an idea made familiar to us in the lines of Virgil:

> His ego nec metas rerum, nec tempora pono:
> Imperium sine fine dedi—

the idea that the dominion of Rome was a divinely appointed dominion, destined by the gods to be world-wide in extent and eternal in duration.

This idea survived the fall of ancient Rome. The Barbarians invaded the empire. Its dominion was destroyed. The Eternal City itself was sacked. But Rome was no less eternal.

To the Pagan party among the Roman citizens it might indeed seem as if the end was at last come, as if the gods had finally abandoned the city where their temples were empty and their names blasphemed. But the Pagan party had now dwindled into a minority, and they were a much smaller minority in energy and influence than in mere numbers. The party of life and vigor, the party of the future, was now the Christian.

Among the Christians the belief, which they had held in earlier times, that with the fall of Rome would come the reign of anti-Christ and the end of all things, was gradually changed, when the facts came upon them, and now, to their belief, it was only the heathen, the wicked Rome which perished. The real Rome, the true Rome, had never fallen. It had been purified, merely, from the dross, and had now come forth from the fire as the new, the Christian Rome. The old Rome had been, they too believed, a divinely appointed dominion, but divinely appointed to be the power which was to build up the world state as the stage on which was to appear the world religion. The mission of heathen Rome was to be found in making straight the way for Christianity. It may be that some such belief as this must be accepted by any philosophy of history which recognizes the fact that the Spirit of God moves upon the otherwise void waters of human action, though a wider philosophy of history than that of St. Augustine may believe, with Pope, that in any divine plan one single movement

> may its end produce,
> Yet serve to second, too, some other use.

To the Christians it began to seem clear that it was the new, the Christian Rome which was to be the divinely appointed, eternal ruler of the world—divinely appointed by the true God, not by the false gods that had perished. This was the real Rome, and this was to be the eternal and all-embracing empire. Of its dominion there was to be no

limits of area or of time. When it should fall, the end of all things would be at hand. The new life which Christianity had inspired in those who had accepted it saved them from despair and made them turn to the future with hope, even from the midst of ruin, and likewise it prevented them from seeing that the old had ended and the new begun.

As to the Barbarians, though the most of those who overthrew the empire were Christians, they could scarcely receive this idea in the same way that the Roman Christians did. They had not the same past behind them. To them the name itself of Rome was a word of awe. The city which had conquered so many provinces and built up such an empire must still hold its sway over their simple imaginations. And it did not seem to them without an awful meaning that the great German king, who had dared to sack the Eternal City, perished so speedily, sinking, in the very midst of his victorious career, into that carefully hidden grave in southern Italy. The emperor himself, so far removed above other men, and surrounded by such an august ceremonial, seemed more than human. All the evidences which they saw about them of the material civilization of the Romans—the roads, the bridges, the buildings, the art and luxury—impressed upon them a vague sense of their own inferiority.

The ideas, therefore, on the subject of the mission of Rome, which they found among the Roman people, they were all ready to adopt as their own. The empire seemed to them, too, sacred and indestructible. A victory over a Roman army was not

a victory over the empire. A province overrun, or even held by a permanently organized government of their own, was not a province separated from the empire. The province and its rulers were both still under the emperor. So some of the greatest Barbarian kings, whose dominions stretched over wide territories that had once been Roman, were proud to call themselves by the Roman title of Consul or Patrician, and felt their power strengthened by the gift of such titles from the emperor. They ruled their own tribes as kings. They ruled the subject territory and people as deputies of the emperors, and under Roman titles. And these were not conscious fictions by which they sought to impose on unwilling subjects. In most cases, at least, they thoroughly believed in them themselves.

And thus when Odoacer, in 476, deposed the last of the puppet emperors of the West, Romulus Augustulus, and resolved to have no more of them, he sent to Constantinople the insignia of the western emperor, with a deputation from the Roman Senate, who proclaimed the union once more of the empire under one ruler. To Odoacer it seemed that, by this act, the Roman Empire, long divided into two, the Eastern and the Western, had been again united into one, under a single emperor reigning at Constantinople. Neither he nor his fellow-actors suspected the real fact, that they had at last done in form what had long been done in reality—brought the dominion of Rome to an end.

At the moment when this took place, the Saxons had firmly established themselves in England; the

Franks were making their way into northern Gaul; a great Visigothic kingdom extended over southern Gaul and Spain; and the Vandals had founded a kingdom in the province of Africa. But these provinces, or, at least, those upon the continent of Europe, still considered themselves parts of the empire. They could as yet conceive of no other existence for themselves.

So at a later time, when Charlemagne had united under his rule almost all the lands which had belonged to the Western empire, and added Germany, which had defied the Roman arms, it seemed the most natural thing for him to do to assume the title of Emperor of Rome. It was not a usurped title. The Roman empire had existed all the time. The Western empire had, for a time, given up its separate existence, but, now that there was a man worthy to be its emperor, it was naturally revived. And later still, when Otto the Great revives again the title, it does not seem either to him or to his people that it is an empty and unreal honor. To their minds the Roman empire still lives, and Otto is a genuine successor of Augustus and Constantine.

In this way, down through all the middle ages, with a gradually perfected theory and a gradually declining reality, this idea rules—the idea of one, divinely appointed, eternal, world-wide empire, the Holy Roman empire, at the head of which is one man, the highest in the political world, whose will is law, the representative of God on earth in matters temporal, the Holy Roman emperor. We must

remember this idea in our study, and that the men of those days thoroughly believed in it, if we would understand the middle ages.

This, then, was that idea, that belief, created by memory and imagination, which acted as one of the great forces to prevent Europe from splitting into fragments. By persuading men that they still all belonged to one common whole, it served as an artificial bond of union at a time when a bond of union of some sort was most vitally necessary.

But this theory had its counterpart. Beside the one representative of God in matters temporal sat the one representative of God in matters spiritual. In the theory, the one Holy Roman emperor has his complement in the one Holy Father, the head of the Catholic Church, and by these coequal powers the divine government of the world is completed.

Each of these theories assisted in the formation and perfection of the other. The actual unity which the Church was forming, and its proclamation of the common citizenship of all men in the kingdom of Christ, assisted in the formation of the political theory. On the other hand, the papal theory was assisted in its development by the remains and the remembrance of Rome's dominion. These two theories, these two powers, go together as different and complementary forms of the same idea. These are the two swords, these the two lights, these the two vicegerents of God on earth.

CHAPTER III.

THE ROMAN CHURCH AND CHRISTIANITY.

WE are now to take up the other, and really more important, force which helped to create Christendom—the Roman Catholic Church. We say the more important force, because the unity which it created was not an imaginary but a real unity, having its root in organic and life-giving principles.

The steps by which the Roman ecclesiastical system was built up form one of the most interesting subjects of study in the history of civilization. This system is also one of the most important creations of the middle ages. It has been said by Macaulay that there is not, and there never was on this earth, a work of human policy so well deserving of examination as the Roman Catholic Church. Further, the Roman Church still lives. It is a great and influential institution of our own time. And more important even than its continued existence is the continued influence which its past exerts, in numberless ways, over the life and thought of to-day; and that, too, in lands over which its actual power has long ceased to rule. We shall, therefore, give most careful attention to the growth and work of the Roman ecclesiastical system.

Whatever may have been the organization of the primitive Church, it must have been an extremely simple one, and there could have been but the slightest official union between its parts. There

had never been wanting, in the early Church, the belief in its spiritual unity. They were all members together of one body—members of the universal Church of God on earth. This belief in a spiritual unity and a common brotherhood was manifested in a frequent interchange of religious documents and of religious counsel, in the reception given to traveling Christians, in the care of each other's poor, and in a variety of similar ways. But these things do not necessarily imply any official unity, and decisive signs of that are everywhere wanting.

Gradually, however, a change began to take place. From among the clergy of a city one began to rise to prominence above the others, and to be distinguished by the title of bishop. From the city the bishop began by degrees to extend his power over the neighboring churches, which he generally found to be an easy matter, either because they had been planted, as missionary outposts, by the church of the city, or because they were too weak to resist. Thus began to be laid the foundations of the diocese.

Along with this change in the constitution of the Church went a corresponding change in the method of regarding both the clergy and the Church. From being a simple body of teachers and exhorters, held in no special reverence, and many of them following some common trade as a means of livelihood, the clergy came to be regarded as a distinct order, separated from the mass of believers, performing a mediatorial office between God and the laity—the channel through which the offerings of

the Church ascended and the blessings of God descended. The number of priestly offices was multiplied, and the whole body assumed more and more the character of the Old Testament priesthood.

The conception of the Church also began to change. It came to be regarded as a visible organized body, formal membership in which was necessary to salvation. The body of heretics who were cast out, the individuals who were excommunicated, were henceforth outside the limits of the Christian society, and could have no claim to participate in its blessings. Membership in the external organization became a test of Christianity, and so, naturally, the idea of the Christian life became changed. The doctrine of justification by faith was gradually lost sight of, and in its place grew up the idea that justification depends upon the doctrinal belief, and is rendered more certain by works, and by the performance of rites and ceremonies. Thus, a change was brought about in the whole conception of the Church and of membership in it, not without protest and exception here and there, but on the whole complete.

We can not pause here to enumerate fully the causes of this change in the church constitution, lying as it does outside our special period, but we may briefly indicate the leading causes. The conflicts with the many heretical sects of the early ages forced the Church to define itself clearly as a distinct body, and rendered it easy to appreciate all the advantages of an organized union. The various persecutions had the same effect. It is possible

that Judaizing tendencies, together with the increasing importance attached to the Old Testament, may have occasionally exerted a slight influence. We must take into account, also, the natural tendency of men toward an organized unity — a tendency which would have peculiar force among men of slight cultivation, and, therefore, perhaps, little able to understand the true spiritual character of their religion. The political organization formed a familiar and suggestive model from which to copy, and, the development once having started in this line, every influence would tend to further it. We find here, also, an instance of what is a very frequent relation of cause and effect in history, that "not merely is A the cause of B, and B the cause of C, but also that A is the cause of B, and B of A." For the belief in an external, visible unity aided in the development of the hierarchical constitution, in which that unity seemed to take form, and, on the other hand, the growing hierarchical system reacted to increase the belief in an external visible unity.

But it was natural that this process should go a step farther. That as the bishop extended his power over the other clergy of the city and of the surrounding territory, so also the bishop of the capital city should extend his power over the other cities of the province, and thus lay the foundations of the metropolitan jurisdiction. And, finally, that a few cities of the empire should strive for the ecclesiastical headship of the whole. That is, the constitution of the Church gradually conformed itself to that of the state and became monarchical.

Three great cities were fitted, by situation and by political or commercial importance, to claim this power—Rome, Constantinople, and Alexandria. Of these, Alexandria fails of permanent success, but Rome and Constantinople both become the seats of ecclesiastical monarchies, ruling over vast territories and enduring through centuries of time.

With Rome only have we to deal, and it now becomes necessary to trace in detail the steps by which the bishop of the city of Rome became the monarch of the Western Church. It must be remembered that the growth of this power covered centuries of time, and we shall return at a later point to trace the last steps in the development.

In looking for the causes which led to the unity of power in the hands of the Roman bishop, the mind turns naturally to the political importance of the city and the influence its past history would exert. Once the real and still the titular mistress of the world, looked up to by all peoples as their capital, regarded with a sacred reverence and awe, it was but natural, as the numbers and influence of the Christians increased in the empire, with the decrease of the real political importance of the city, that much of this feeling should be transferred to the church of the Imperial City and to its bishop.

Many circumstances rendered this transfer easy and almost inevitable. The idea had grown up among the Christians that the great mission which the Roman empire had been destined to accomplish in the Providential plan of history was to prepare a stage for the coming and the spread of Christianity;

—that this was the ground of its existence, its sole work. If this were true, it was the manifest intention of Providence that the city of Rome should be the capital of Christianity. We find one of the first great popes, Leo I., appealing to this idea in support of his claims against the council of Chalcedon, in the year 451. Again, if the Christian Church was an external and visible unity, where could that unity find a more natural representative and head than in the capital city of the world? Thus we have Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage in the third century, who would not have tolerated for a moment any actual exercise of supremacy on the part of the Roman bishop, nevertheless advocating the theory that the Roman Church is the source of sacerdotal unity. So, also, the belief gained ground that Peter had been designated by Christ as the head of the apostolic body, and along with it the belief, either true or false, that Peter had been Bishop of Rome, and had suffered martyrdom there. If the primate of the Apostles had selected Rome as his bishopric, it must have been because in it was to abide the primacy of the Christian world.

Certain circumstances connected with the peculiar situation of Rome, and of its church, assisted this development. In early times the position of that church, near to the imperial throne, had been important. In times of persecution or danger its wise or its inconsiderate action might determine the fate of the other churches. From it the first news of intended imperial action, with advice as to their conduct, reached the other churches. The early

Roman Church had been very charitable, and its benefactions had made it generally beloved. It had also been early distinguished for missionary activity, and many western churches looked up to it as their mother church. Again, it was the only great and important city in the West. In the East the dominion of Constantinople was disputed by other equally, or almost equally, important cities, which gave rise to a divided power and a divided loyalty. But, in the West, Rome had no rivals to fear, and the development of the metropolitan jurisdictions gave her but little trouble. Still more important was the fact that this was the only apostolic see in the West. Whether Peter had been at Rome or not, Paul certainly had, and she possessed an epistle from his hand. In the contest with the various heretical sects of the first centuries, frequent reference was made to the apostolic churches as the source of true doctrine and pure tradition. "Go to Corinth, go to Rome," it was said, "and see if your doctrine can be found in the teachings of the Apostles." It was also important that the fierce doctrinal controversies which rent the Eastern Church found no counterpart in the West. The Latin mind was not so finely subtile as the Greek, and had no tendency to run off into such various and minute speculations. Rome was, therefore, in a position to be appealed to by the contending parties of the Eastern Church, and to reap all the advantages which such appeals would give her. Her fidelity, in the main, to the principles of orthodoxy rendered her gains in this direction more perma-

nent. To the other facts under this head is to be added this: that, after this development had fairly begun, the emperors were almost continuously absent from the city. There was thus no greater power near at hand to overshadow the bishop and diminish his importance in the eyes of the people. He became by degrees the greatest officer and the highest power in the city. The distance, also, which separated the bishop from the imperial court might decrease the importance of his theological opinions in the eyes of the latter, compared with those of bishops nearer to the throne. The Roman bishops were thus left almost entirely free from that compulsory adoption of dogmas which proved so disastrous to the bishops of Constantinople.

The idea of taking an appeal to the Bishop of Rome, not merely in matters of doctrine, but also in matters of discipline and government, would very naturally and very early occur to a party which believed itself aggrieved. These appeals Rome did everything in her power to encourage. Where a show of justice and a prospect of success would warrant, her interference was usually not sought in vain. However, though by no means always just, it is to be said that her action was so generally in favor of right and morality as to give to her decisions weight and authority. This process was greatly encouraged by a decree of the Council of Sardica, in 347, which allowed the right of appeal, under certain circumstances, to the Roman bishop. In the ages of general ignorance which followed, the decrees of this council were confounded with those

of the earlier Council of Nice, which was regarded as the most important and most authoritative council since the beginning of the Church. A greater and more decisive influence was thus given to this decree than naturally belonged to it, and the Roman bishops failed not to reap the utmost advantage from it.

In 445 came a decree of the Emperor Valentinian III., confirming the power of the Bishop of Rome in strong terms and making a refusal to obey him an offense against the empire. It is doubtful how much positive influence an edict of this sort would have at that time in increasing the actual power of the bishop, but it has been suggested that the later emperors might not have objected to see growing up beside them a power able to relieve them of a portion of the difficult task of governing their empire.

We must not forget to mention the character of the early bishops of Rome, and their speedy discovery of the opportunity before them. In them the old Roman spirit of conquest and of government seemed to revive once more, and the new Rome to set out on a new career of empire-building. Three names, destined to be of such vast significance in the later history of the Church, were, by one of those meaningless coincidences frequent in history, also foremost in starting the papacy in its course of development—Innocent, Leo, and Gregory.

Two events happening in the field of political history exerted a strong influence in favor of the papal power. The first of these was the capture of

Rome by Alaric, King of the Visigoths, in 410. In the sack of the city which followed, heathenism perished; its temples were destroyed; its chief supporters were rendered penniless exiles; neither riches nor influence could any longer be brought to its aid. The Pope, happily absent from the city at the time, was now left not only the most important officer, but also the most important man in Rome. By it the old Rome, the wicked and heathen Rome, with its wealth, its officers, its religion, seemed to be swept away, and the new Rome, the real Rome, brought into being, with its Cæsar ready to ascend its throne, and to marshal his different, but not less real, armies, and to lead into the city once more, from distant provinces, new streams of tribute.

The second event was the rise of the Carolingian family in France and its alliance with the papacy. When Pippin le Bref, about the year 750, was ready to assume the name in addition to the power of king, which he had long possessed, he needed the appearance of right to be gained from the sanction of so influential a religious power, and, accordingly, he appealed to the Pope. The Pope was just at that moment greatly in need of the aid and protection of a powerful political friend, and readily gave the expected answer. The transfer of the crown was made from Merovingian to Carolingian, and the papacy secured not merely the desired military protection, but also the beginning of its temporal dominion in the confiscated lands which Pippin bestowed upon it; and, what was of still greater value, it had established a precedent, in the bestowal of the

crown, to support its future claims of control over the temporal powers of the world.

During the eighth century, or soon after, the influence of two most remarkable forgeries begins to be felt in support of the papal claims. These also deserve some attention from the way in which they illustrate the character of the middle ages. The first of these, the Donation of Constantine, frequently appealed to by the popes against their princely adversaries, relates that Constantine, in gratitude for a miraculous cure wrought by the Pope, withdrew from Rome, built in the distant East a new capital for his empire, and granted by edict, to the Pope, sovereignty over the West, together with various imperial prerogatives.

By the second forgery, the false decretals, the canon law of the Church received an immense accession. Appearing under the name of Isidore, a name made famous long before by a collector of genuine canons, they bore the weight of his authority, and are generally known as the Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals. They pretend to contain the letters and decrees of the earliest popes, and with these are mingled authentic and unauthentic decrees of later popes and councils down to the beginning of the eighth century. In them the papal power and independence were advanced to the highest degree. The claims to dominion, which Nicholas I. was now vigorously pushing, received the sanction of the earliest ages. Along with the exaltation of the Pope goes that of all the subordinate clergy. Nor are the false decretals concerned with the clergy

alone. All subjects connected with the Church—sacraments, ceremonies, vestments, relics—seem to find a place in them. The whole ecclesiastical system appears as if organized for administrative, legislative, and judicial purposes. In a word, the new Roman empire has received in them a system of law in many respects as remarkable as that of the older empire.

Both these forgeries, particularly the latter, are filled with the baldest historical and chronological mistakes, but the learning of those times was not equal to the task of detecting them, and they enjoyed a practically undisputed influence till the revived learning of a later age showed their absurdities and destroyed their authority.

So was built up by all these varied causes, acting through long ages, by the mighty working of Roman ideas, by the fortunate position of the city, by the genius of the early bishops, by favoring political events, this one of the two powers which served to bind the people of Europe together during mediæval times.

Along with the papacy, another great institution of the mediæval Church demands our attention—monasticism. Borrowed from the East, and orginating in eastern ways of looking at life and its evils, it received rapid extension in the West, with the increasing externalizing of the Church, and the consequent change in the idea of the Christian life. If the Christian life consists in the doing of works, and if the holiest man is he who does the most numer-

ous and the most difficult works, what can be better than to retire from the world, with all its temptations to self-seeking and to sin, and what life can be holier than his who spends it all in absolute seclusion and in constant penance for his sins?

The extreme forms of asceticism are not frequent in the West. They are hardly consistent with the western character. Here the tendency is more toward the formation of regularly organized communities, maintaining more or less of connection with the outside world and providing their members with regular and laborious employment. Under but slightly varying forms, monasticism spread rapidly through all the Christian countries of the West, and often the monasteries formed, as it were, garrisons to hold in subjection newly conquered lands, still Pagan at heart, or even fortified outposts beyond the frontiers of Christianity.

The direct services of monasticism to civilization are not slight. In many cases the monks became the teachers, to barbarous nations, of agriculture and the arts of domestic life. Marshy, pestilential, and abandoned lands were reclaimed to cultivation, dikes were built, and manufactures begun. The poor found in the monks almost their only guardians. Within the walls of the monasteries thousands of men and women found their sole refuge during those troublous times, almost the only places where order and quiet survived. Many books were preserved in the monastic libraries which must otherwise have been lost, and many hours were spent by laborious monks in copying

manuscripts which no doubt they could not understand. Schools were frequently established in connection with the monasteries, and the renewed learning and science of Europe took its first feeble steps under the guidance of monks.

Almost inevitably, it would seem, falling into speedy depths of corruption, the system was as often brought back, by thorough reformers, to its simpler life and virtues. And very often, during these centuries of darkness, within the walls of the monastery and under the sackcloth of the monk, there lived on, after they seemed driven from almost every other abode, the principles of a genuine Christianity, the practice of its real virtues, and the living of its real life.

We have now traced very briefly the development of the ecclesiastical system, and somewhat more in detail the steps by which the monarchical power of the bishops of Rome was firmly established. There now remains a task of still greater importance. So great and wide-reaching an institution as this must have served some great purpose in the development of civilization. Can we ascertain what it was?

We have already briefly indicated one important result of this organization. It was the chief power which preserved the unity of Europe during the middle ages. It created a real instead of an imagined unity. In every nation of Europe it *formed a power beside* the civil power, but independent *of it, arrogating* to itself the entire control

of some of the most important departments of the national life, but looking away for direction and support to a distant and foreign capital. It had its own administrative and executive officers, its own legislative assemblies, codes of law, and courts of justice. Often the monarch found that he had something more to deal with than merely a refractory vassal, when he laid his hands on a bishop or an abbot, for the Church was not without the means of self-defense, or even of offensive warfare. The dreaded punishment of excommunication, or the still more dreaded punishment of the interdict, which visited upon the innocent souls of an entire kingdom the crimes of its rulers, when cunningly combined with favoring circumstances, forced the haughtiest of mediæval princes to bow to the will of the popes. And of this system Rome was not the nominal only, but the real capital. From it issued decrees, mandates, instructions, open or secret, which were heard and obeyed in all the countries of Europe alike; and back to it in return flowed as steady a stream of appeals, reports, and taxes as to any temporal capital.

By means of this real power and of her position, which enabled her to act as an arbiter between nations, she was able to form a genuine as well as a theoretical unity. And this unity was not an unconscious and unrealized fact. It was everywhere insisted upon and boasted of. Every attempt to take an independent or separate religious, or even intellectual position, within this spiritual kingdom, whether on the part of a single man or a powerful

body of men, was treated as treason and crushed out in blood and fire.

It is difficult to conceive how, without this all-pervading power, the states of Europe could have been held together in a common system during the centuries of anarchy and confusion which followed the fall of the Roman empire. Without it they must apparently have fallen apart into mutually hostile and destructive fragments without the possibility of a common progress, or have been bound together under a single despotic government, under which there could be only an Asiatic civilization. To compare for an instant the results of either of these conditions with the benefits which flow from the modern virtual federation of independent nations is all that is necessary in order to estimate the services of the Church to civilization in this particular.

If we could conceive of Greece and Rome and Carthage, three powerful and wealthy nations, having each its own race peculiarities, each its own way of handling a subject, each seizing upon and setting into strong light its own side of a great truth, and yet bound together by common sympathies, having a common stock of sentiments and ideas, and handing over readily, the one to the other, the products of its own thinking and its own activity—if this could have been true, what might not ancient civilization have accomplished? But it was impossible. There was no force which could hold them together and yet apart. That this has become the *state of things in mo*dern Europe is most largely due *to the Roman* Church.

Again, the compact and monarchical organization of the Church doubtless enabled it to preserve its independence during the period of Barbarian rule in Europe and to follow out its line of self-development uncontrolled from without. It thus, no doubt, escaped the evils which would have followed had it been compelled to obey the ignorant dictation of despotic princes.

It has been sometimes said that the great purpose of the monarchical Church is to be found in the necessity of some such strong organization to preserve Christianity from the dangers incident to the Barbarian invasions. Had Christianity remained, it is said, simply the pure and spiritual religion of its early days, it would have been swept out of existence by the deluge of barbarism which poured over the Roman world. And so the externalizing of the Church and its powerful organization find their main purpose in the necessity of preserving Christianity from this danger. But a little reflection upon the facts will lead one to question whether we should venture to assert this to be an important part of the mission of the ecclesiastical system. Christianity had already become corrupted, and almost lost to sight, before the influence of the Barbarian races began to be felt, and, in nearly any case, it might have preserved as much of its true life from age to age as was actually kept. Had a pure and spiritual Christianity existed wherever it was professed throughout the Roman world, it would *have* needed no ecclesiastical monarchy to *have* preserved it. For such a spiritual religion

could not have existed so widely unless there had existed also such a condition of mental and moral civilization that the dangers which actually arose from the Barbarian invasions would not have been felt. The new elements would have been absorbed in much less time, and at much less cost, than was the case.

But this is ideal rather than real history, and we may feel much more confidence in stating as important one further result from the ecclesiastical system. From its position and power, the Church was able to stand as a protector between the Romanized provincials and their Barbarian conquerors. These conquerors were of the same religion as their subjects, and the Roman Church, with its real power and its gorgeous ritual, filled them with reverence and awe. The priest thus became a protecting and restraining power in every hamlet of the West, and the Church was able to act as the preserver of many Latin elements which might otherwise have been lost, and to aid in bringing about that close union of German and Latin elements which characterizes modern Europe.

Finally, we must carefully distinguish between the influence of the Church as an ecclesiastical system and the influence which was exerted by that genuine Christianity which still lived through all these ages, however feebly, and which made itself felt in many places and at many times when its true spirit seemed most thoroughly lost. The failure to make this distinction has marked some prominent

writers on the middle ages. It must be borne in mind that no one can understand the history of civilization who does not know that the ecclesiastical system is not Christianity, nor even any product of Christianity; that Christianity is no more responsible, as a cause, for the results which flowed from it than it is for those which flowed from the Roman law; but that it had its own separate life and separate influence, and that this life survived and this influence was felt in every century and every generation. In the very darkest hour, when her doctrine, as popularly understood and practiced, was most absurd, and the lives of her professed representatives were most corrupt, the Church "never sullied the purity of her moral teaching." She always held up in theory the pure standard of Christian morality. And there is never a time when men are not to be found —sometimes in the monasteries, living simple monastic lives, or, perhaps, becoming great reformers of the monastic rule, sometimes the more insignificant "poure persoun of a toun," sometimes even bodies of men, more rarely men of the upper and princely ranks—who lived the pure lives of a genuine Christianity. By means of these unnoticed forces and of the written documents, Christianity was preserved from age to age, in the midst of the ignorant and superstitious worship that went by its name, until the time of awakening should come.

Of course, the greatest influence of Christianity is exerted in a silent way upon the motives of individual action. This forms no part of recorded *history,* and the attempt to set forth the actual his-

torical workings of Christianity, as is the case with any similar historic force, must always remain incomplete. But we may indicate a few of the teachings of Christianity which undoubtedly had much influence during the middle ages.

In the first place, it taught the existence of a supreme moral law, distinct from the law of the state, but equally, or even more binding upon every man. This law was enforced by an extensive system of punishments, called penances, by constantly reiterated precepts, and by examples more rare, but, where occurring, of powerful influence. Though the knowledge that this moral law existed might not be new, yet the enforcement of it by an elaborate system of penalties, distinct from the penalties inflicted by the law of the state, was new, and could not fail to have great influence during barbarous times.

In connection with this, it taught the immense moral significance of the least important actions—actions of which the state law took no account, and which the heathen world had regarded as without effect upon the character. To these it gave a greater importance by showing their possible bearing on the eternal destinies of the soul.

It taught the immense worth of the individual. This fell in naturally with German ideas on the same subject, and, in part at least, to their common influence is due the modern idea that the state is for the people, as contrasted with the idea of the ancient world, that the individual exists only for the state. But in saying, "What shall it profit a man if

he gain the whole world and lose his own soul," Christianity went a step in this direction beyond even German ideas.

It taught the absolute equality of all men. Master and slave, prince and peasant, stood precisely alike before the altar. The penitential system of the Church, while Christianity still had influence in shaping that system, drew no distinctions, except that it held the master strictly accountable for his action toward the slave in matters of which the civil law took no notice. It has been objected to Christianity that it did not immediately attack and overthrow such an institution as human slavery; but it has been well answered that the objection is based upon a misunderstanding of Christianity and of its method of working. It rarely or never accomplishes any great reform by revolutionary means, but works rather upon the causes of the evil, and, these being removed, the evil dies of itself —a slower but much more effective way. In this way it began to work immediately upon slavery, and, though retarded by the subsequent corruption which it underwent itself, it was in the end the most powerful cause which overthrew that system. Of course, it will be understood that the relation of the ecclesiastical system to slavery in later times is not to be ascribed to Christianity as its cause.

These sentences can certainly make no pretension to being a complete statement of the influence which Christianity exerted. The attempt to make such a statement for any period of the remote, we may say of the immediate past, would be hopeless.

It can only be done in the most general way, for Christianity lies within the realm of those forces which the science of history can as yet do no more than to point out.

CHAPTER IV.

THE GERMANS.

"THE sages of the East were teaching wisdom beneath the palms; the merchants of Tyre and Carthage were weighing their heavy anchors and spreading their purple sails for far-off seas; the Greek was making the earth fair by his art, and the Roman founding his colossal empire of force, while the Teuton sat, yet a child, unknown and naked among the forest beasts: and yet unharmed and in his sport he lorded it over them; for the child was of a royal race, and destined to win glory for all time to come." So Kingsley has translated for us the words of the German Menzel; and they form a fitting introduction to the movement which we have now to chronicle.

Long before the ecclesiastical system had reached the completeness to which we have brought it, and while the Roman empire was still a fact and not a mere theory, the movement of the German tribes had begun. Singly and in small bodies they had crossed the boundaries of the empire and enlisted in the Roman armies, becoming finally, in the decline of the Roman population, the chief defend-

ers of the empire against their own kindred. The great Gothic King Alaric found among the Roman commanders his only match in the Vandal Stilicho. Small tribes were sometimes assigned lands within the limits of the empire, rendering military service in return, or undertaking to defend parts of the frontier. At last the barriers were everywhere broken down, and the great German tribes, driven on by still more barbarous hordes in the rear, or impelled by hopes of plunder, overran the empire.

The most important of these tribes were the Goths, the Franks, the Saxons, and the Lombards. The Goths, driven, by the fiercer Huns, out of their great kingdom which stretched from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea, crossed the Danube into the Roman dominions in the year 376. The Emperor Valens, attempting to subdue them, was defeated and slain. Then the Visigothic division of the nation, under Alaric, ravaged the peninsulas of Greece and Italy, and sacked the city of Rome in 410. Upon the death of Alaric, which speedily followed, Athaulf, his brother-in-law, became the head of the Visigoths, gave up his earlier thought of establishing a great Gothic empire, married the sister of the emperor, and led the nation into Spain, where they settled themselves and established a permanent rule, extending also over southern Gaul.

The Ostrogoths, remaining longer in the East, came, about the end of the fifth century, into Italy, and took possession of it. Under Theodoric, their kingdom was a very brilliant and promising one; but it was of short life. It perished, and the Ostro-

gothic people were exterminated, in a momentary spasm of conquest which seized the Eastern empire under Justinian, at the middle of the sixth century.

In the latter half of the fifth century the Franks firmly established themselves in northern Gaul, conquered other German tribes which had preceded them in eastern Gaul, and gradually extended their power over the Ostrogothic lands in the South as far as the Pyrenees.

The Saxons and Angles had begun to make descents upon the coasts of Britain very soon after the withdrawal of the Roman legions in 410. At first making mere plundering raids and carrying their plunder home with them, they soon began to remain in the island and to organize little kingdoms there, and to extend their conquests over its accessible parts. After a time the other kingdoms were swallowed up by Wessex, whose kings came to be recognized as the overlords of the island.

The Lombards, the latest one of the tribes mentioned to establish itself within the empire, invaded Italy a little after the middle of the sixth century, and soon extended their power over a large part of the territory formerly occupied by the Ostrogoths.

Besides these, other smaller tribes made settlements and established kingdoms within the boundaries of the empire, but these were soon swallowed up in the dominions of some one or other of their powerful neighbors.

As to the relation of these tribes to Christianity, the Goths and Lombards were Christian before their entry into the Roman dominions, but their

Christianity was Arianism, a Unitarian heresy looked upon with horror by all good Catholics. The Gothic kings, however, rarely allowed persecution of their Catholic subjects, and displayed a much truer spirit of Christian toleration than did their opponents. The Franks were heathen when they entered Gaul, but they were speedily converted to orthodox Catholic Christianity, and became the close allies of the Roman Church. The Saxons, also, were heathen, and remained so for a century and a half after their settlement; but they finally were converted by missionaries sent from Rome.

These Germans were something more than mere savages. They were ignorant. They were often cruel and bloodthirsty. They exhibited many of the habits and characteristics of savage life. But it was the savageness of a young and pure race, not that of a debased and degraded one. Upon them the terribly corrupt civilization with which they came in contact had no such poisonous and destroying effect as civilizations, by no means so corrupt as the Roman, have had on many savage peoples. They brought with them an almost unequaled capacity for becoming civilized. They readily adapted themselves to new ways, readily learned what there was to be taught them, even, in some cases, learned new languages so rapidly that, in a generation or two, they had forgotten their own. This is not saying that they adopted all of ancient civilization. There was much that they could not understand. Much was destroyed in the wars by

which they forced their way into the empire, and in their quarrels over its spoils. Much they ruined in mere wantonness. Still, much was saved. No doubt the influence extended over their imaginations by the two great powers which we have already described — the Roman empire, and the Roman Church—acted as a restraint upon their violence.

But the Germans did more than merely to absorb the older civilization. Settling in so many lands of Europe, forming in them all important parts of the population, in some remaining permanently the ruling race, they necessarily made contributions of their own to the common civilization which we possess. Even in their native forests of Germany, before they had learned their strength, their savage life, as described to us by Tacitus, contained rare promise of a coming civilization.

Of their government, he tells us that their kings and commanders were elected. The kings were chosen on account of their nobility, the commanders on account of their bravery. The power of the kings was not unlimited or arbitrary, and the leaders commanded rather by example than by right. If they were full of energy and prompt, and ready to lead the front line, they were highly honored. Their legislation was by public assemblies. The chiefs took counsel by themselves concerning less important matters, concerning the more important, all together, but the matters upon which all were to decide were first discussed by the chiefs. The assembly met upon certain fixed days, unless something unexpected called them together at another

time. The people, having come together armed, sat down just as they pleased, and the assembly was called to order by the priests. Then the king, or a chief, according to age, or nobility, or renown in war, or eloquence, spoke, yet no one influenced the assembly by his authority, but by persuasion only. If the opinions expressed were displeasing to the people, they rejected them with a shout; if pleasing, they clashed their arms together. In these assemblies were chosen the chiefs who had the administering of justice in the cantons and villages. Each of these chiefs had a hundred companions from the common people as his council and authority.

It was a strong tie which bound the chief and his men together. No one was ashamed to be seen among the followers of a chief. They were divided into degrees of rank according to the judgment of the chief whom they followed, and there was great rivalry among them for the first place in his estimation, and among the chiefs as to who should have the most and the bravest followers. In battle it was disgraceful for the chief to be surpassed in bravery, or for the followers not to equal the bravery of the chief. He was infamous for all the rest of his life who was willing to survive the death of his chief upon the field of battle. To guard him, to protect him, to assign the glory of their own brave acts to him, was a sacred duty. The chiefs fought for victory, the followers for their chief.

They regarded woman in her sphere as the equal

of man. This was typified in the equal exchange of presents which formed the marriage ceremony. They dreaded captivity much more for their women than for themselves, and the securest hostages that could be demanded were the daughters of their chiefs. They believed that there is in woman something of divinity, and they were accustomed to follow her advice.

They had also, at least, some lofty religious ideas. They did not suppose that the gods dwell within walls, nor that they could be represented under any kind of human form. They set apart groves and forests as places of worship, and called by the names of the gods that secret power which reverence alone beholds.

These were savages, perhaps, but savages certainly of a sort that is not common.

These elements of their national life they brought with them into their new homes. They brought their free political governments, their public assemblies, which elected kings and passed laws, and in which every freeman had an equal voice; and though these may have speedily disappeared as national assemblies, or changed their character under the new conditions of wide territorial dominion, it was long centuries before absolute monarchies arose in these nations upon the ruins of German liberties. In one favored land—Saxon England—placed amid fostering conditions, these germs of liberty grew into the free government which we have inherited *and which the civilized* world is adopting.

They brought with them their systems of law,

crude, perhaps, and but partially developed, yet in some important points not without influence upon later civilization. This is particularly true of the practice of private revenge, and also of the idea of the sacredness of the freeman's person, and the consequent money compensation for crime, which exerted a great influence upon the penitential discipline of the Church. In regard to law, also, we naturally turn to England, as the country where German elements have developed in the freest way, with the least of foreign influence. It is no slight thing for a nation to have developed, from the small beginnings of the fifth century, the system of the common law, to have built up a living, self-developing law, with the power of adapting itself to new needs, of answering new demands. It has grown up in the same way in which the great system of the Roman law grew up in the ages of its formation. Like that, also, it has come to be the law of a great empire; but the principles of English law, under the varying forms which varying needs require, are now obeyed through vastly wider dominions than ever obeyed the Roman law.

They brought with them, also, that element of personal loyalty, of passionate devotion to a chief, the strong tie between the lord and his followers, which formed so prominent a feature in that complex creation—the feudal system.

The high regard in which they held woman, agreeing readily with Christian ideas upon the same subject, aided in the rise of chivalry and in giving to woman her present position.

We must not forget, also, what has already been mentioned, that it is to German ideas of personal independence, and of the value and worth of the individual, as well as to Christian, we owe it that we do not now consider the individual citizen as existing solely for the state, but rather find the end of the state in the freedom and prosperity of the individual citizen.

We may, perhaps, be allowed to add that by their ideas of the supreme Deity, and of duty and virtue, the Germans were prepared for a ready acceptance of Christianity, and, at a later time, when a renewed learning had opened the way, for a clearer conception of its real meaning than had been possible to mediæval times.

In a truer sense, perhaps, might it be said of the Germans than of any other people, that they were the heirs of all the ages. All the past was their inheritance. Greece had done its work for the world, in literature and art, in philosophy and science, and, being able to do no more, had left the work to them. Rome had done all that it could in creating its magnificent system of law, and erecting its colossal empire, and they had entered into its labors. Out from the Jews, if not of them, had come Christianity, bringing to the new people its rich contribution upon the moral and religious side of civilization. They did, indeed, stand in the foremost files of time. Greek thought and poetry, and all its unfulfilled hope, and Roman law, and Roman polity, and that stupendous miracle which closed for ever

the books of Jewish history—all were left to them; and, how nobly they have proved themselves worthy of the trust, the world to-day can testify.

CHAPTER V.

CHARLEMAGNE.

WE have now before us all the actors in the drama of mediæval history, all the elements from which a new civilization is to be produced. The ancient world has made its contribution of literature and philosophy, much of it for the time being lost, its contribution of law, and government, and the various products of material civilization. Out of Judea has come the religion of the future, with its store of new ideas and forces. It has infused into a portion of the ancient society a renewed life, and on it has been erected an imperial Church. From Germany has come a new people, with new blood, new vigor and energy, new ideas. But this new people has brought with it, also, violence, confusion, the reign of brute force, ignorance. In a word, the bringing in of the German tribes has brought a great temporary loss of civilization. This Europe must immediately set about recovering.

But the first step toward civilization must be the securing of some degree, at least, of civil order. Without this, progress is not possible. Men must be secure in the enjoyment of their works, they

must have protection and leisure for studies and for art, means of intercourse and communication must be easy and safe, if there is to be an increasing civilization. These things are now obtained for us by national governments. But then nations had not begun to exist. To be sure, the Barbarians who had descended upon the empire had set up kingdoms in the provinces which they had conquered. These, in some places, and for a moment, may have been brilliant and "peace-giving," but for the most part they were rude and imperfect. There was, within these kingdoms, no united and harmonious population, one in race and history, having common traditions and common aspirations, no homogeneous people to form the basis of a really strong and orderly government. Time only could form this out of the mixture of elements that existed during the middle ages, and time was yet lacking. The Roman system of roads and bridges, also, had either been destroyed during the invasions or had fallen into decay, and communication between the different parts of a kingdom had become a very tedious and difficult matter. News even of matters of national importance traveled but slowly to the remoter parts of the country. It is no wonder that, at a somewhat later time than this which we have reached, a lord of Aquitaine should still inscribe, at the head of his acts, the name of a king of France who was dead. He did not know who was king. Within the kingdom there was no central authority capable of making its power respected throughout all parts of the

dominion nominally subject to it, or of extending protection and security to all its subjects. Wherever, for a time, good order is secured, under a Barbarian government, as in Italy under Theodoric at the beginning of the sixth century, it can be but temporary. A new invasion destroys it, or the succeeding king is unable to maintain it; and these few points of order appear the more important from their contrast with the general confusion.

The first thing, then, which Europe strives to gain is civil order. Not that the men of those days, or any single man among them, reasoned the matter out in this way, and said, "Let us set about obtaining security so that we may get civilization," but anarchy can never be anything more than a temporary state of things. Man's nature impels him to form regularly organized governments whenever it is possible. Besides being necessary to any further progress, then, this would naturally be the first step which a beginning civilization would take. The first hopeful effort to secure a permanent civil order was that of Charlemagne.

The kings of the Merovingian family, descendants of Clovis, the Frankish conqueror of Gaul, had degenerated in time into mere shadows, possessing the name, but not the authority of king. In their place, princes of a new family had arisen, who, while holding the office of mayor of the palace, a kind of steward of the realm, had gradually concentrated the real power in their own hands, and more and more withdrawn the kings from the govern-

ment. When, in the early part of the eighth century, the victorious hosts of the Saracens had swept across the Pyrenees and up into the center of France, Charles Martel, mayor of the palace, the grandfather of Charlemagne, at the head of all the forces which could be brought together to oppose them, had won the great victory of Tours. In thus saving Europe to Christianity and to western civilization, he had reflected glory upon his family, and raised them to the position of national heroes. His son, Pippin the Short, felt his power secure enough to depose, in 751, with the assistance of the Pope, as has been related, the last descendant of Clovis, and to proclaim himself king.

This alliance between the Pope and the Carolingians is an unmistakable sign of the times—a sign that the old has ended and the new begun; that the Western world has severed itself from the old Roman empire, and has begun its own separate and independent existence. In the theory which the men of those days held, the empire might still be one and undivided, the West might still be Roman, the Eastern emperor might still be emperor of all; but, when a practical case arises, they act, not upon the theory which they believe, but upon the real facts of which they are unconscious. The Pope, in danger from the hated Lombards, knows well that no aid is to be expected from the nominal sovereign of the world, and so he turns to the rising power of the West, though it be Barbarian, and appeals to *the Franks.* For Pippin, desirous of a new title, *the ratification* of the head of the Church is sut-

ficient, and he does not think it necessary to await the consent of the emperor.

The first Carolingian king made the rule of the Frankish monarchs over southern Gaul more of a reality than it had ever been before, and left to his son Charles an increasing dominion. The alliance against the Lombards enabled Charles to add to his territory all of Italy, except some small portions which still obeyed the Eastern emperor.

But if this great dominion is to be rendered permanent, if a settled order is at last to be secured, one great danger which perpetually threatens it must be removed. That is, the danger of new Barbarian invasions. To remove this, Germany itself must be conquered and Christianized. The clear mind of Charlemagne must have seen this, and, after thirty-three years of merciless campaigning, he succeeded in his aim. Thirty-three years, because he had to do over and over again the same work. The stubborn Saxons yielded while he remained in the field, but burst into a flame of rebellion as soon as his army was withdrawn. But at last he did conquer Germany, compelled its people to accept Christianity, and planted monasteries in the land as garrisons and centers of civilization. Christianity, forced upon the Germans, and at first regarded as a mark of national disgrace and subjection, at last gained a genuine hold upon their hearts, the civilizing influences which Charlemagne had set in motion worked by degrees, and the danger of further German invasions passed away.

It may be that there seemed to Charlemagne

also, a threatening danger in the Arabian empire beyond the Pyrenees. In reality, the attention of the Saracens was now taken up with their own internal dissensions, and they were no longer to be feared by Europe. But very likely Charlemagne was not in a position to understand this fact, and a successful campaign or two gave him the frontier of the Ebro.

His internal government was marked by the same clear statesmanship, and the same desire to render permanent the results of his work. Under the Merovingian family, the kingdom had been divided into a series of districts for administrative and judicial purposes, over each of which was appointed a permanent officer, called the graf or count, who was to act as judge, and to be responsible for the good order of his district. In addition to the count, the Merovingian kings had sometimes appointed another officer or second count, for special purposes, in these districts, called domesticus, as having special charge of the royal domains. These officers Charlemagne regularly appointed to act with the count, and they came to be called judex, or judge.

But still the purpose of Charlemagne was hardly accomplished. The means of internal government were not yet complete. In the process of time the office of count had come to be looked upon more as a personal possession and rank than as an administrative office of the state. The counts could hardly be used by Charlemagne as the direct organs of government which he wished to have in every part of

his empire. He, therefore, changed the occasional *missi dominici* of the earlier kings into regular officers who should be more closely connected with himself, and who could hold the other officers to their duty. He appointed them in the spring of each year, for large fixed circuits, and for the year they superintended the whole administration of their districts in place of the king. They held provincial assemblies, at which were to appear all officers, temporal and spiritual, and all vassals of the king, and where were decided all important questions of policy and inquiries instituted into everything concerning the government of their districts. Any one might appear before the assembly and enter complaint against any officer or object to any measure. The *missi dominici* had full power. They were not considered as officers, but as representatives of the king. They stood in the place which the king would have occupied had he been present. At the close of their year of office they presented full reports of their doings to Charlemagne, and these reports served as the basis of the instructions which were given to the *missi dominici* of the following year. By this means the central power was brought into direct and effective connection with all parts of the territory subject to it.

Though, perhaps, Charlemagne can not be ranked as a great lawgiver, the greater part of his laws concerning special needs of the time rather than great principles of law, yet he displayed very great legislative activity. The old German public assemblies were held annually, or assemblies as near to the old as the changed circumstances rendered possible.

In the autumn of each year the nobles met together chiefly to bring the customary presents which took the place of taxes. In the spring met the great assembly which passed, as in the early times, for the whole people. To this came nobles and clergy, with their vassals, all the men liable to military service, if they were summoned, and from the region near the place of meeting whoever wished. This assembly had the decision in all questions of war and peace, and in the changing of the laws, and as well in questions of dogma and church constitution. There was, however, no real power of discussion. Everything was prepared for the assembly by the smaller council of the king, and, when submitted to the assembly, passed without opposition. Dissent could express itself, and have influence only in the preliminary consideration of a matter, before it was presented to the assembly.

Charlemagne saw, too, that nothing could give greater permanence to the civilization which he wished to establish than a revival of learning, and he tried to organize a general system of education. But the resources at his command were very scanty, and even the ideas which he could form—the ideas of a great mind—must have been narrowed by the universal ignorance of the time. We can only be surprised that his plans were as broad and generous as they were.

England was the country where, at that time, the light of learning, almost extinguished everywhere, was burning with the most brightness. In the schools of England a line of illustrious teachers—

illustrious for those times—had kept alive the sparks of learning brought into the country by Theodorus in the seventh century, and in the cathedral school of York had been trained the greatest scholar of the day—Alcuin. Him Charlemagne summoned to the continent, that he might put him at the head of his educational system. Alcuin's active duties seem to have been mostly in the school of the palace, where members of the royal family, courtiers and ladies, and young people who were to occupy important stations in the government, mingled together, taking part in the studies of the time, which seem to have been conducted in a conversational manner by question and answer. Charlemagne himself was often present in the school, sometimes, to the discomfiture of Alcuin, asking troublesome questions that would not easily be answered, or remembering the answers of a while ago which seemed to contradict those of to-day.

But Alcuin's hand is, also, easily to be seen in the directions which Charlemagne sends out to his clergy, the only body into whose hands the cause of education could be committed. He first directs that care should be taken with the education of the clergy, that they may be able to understand the Scriptures and to instruct others, teachers to assist in this work being brought from Rome and sent to the chief monasteries. Then, later, the monasteries are directed to maintain schools for the teaching of boys in "the Psalms, musical notation, singing, arithmetic, and grammar." And, finally, we have a *bishop,* who was also one of the *missi dominici,* di-

recting the clergy of his diocese to maintain schools in every town and village for the free instruction of children, a direction which "appears to have been widely copied in other dioceses.' This may not seem a very extensive system of education, judged by our own day, but it was one remarkably wise and well organized for the time in which it was established, and complete enough to have led to an earlier revival of learning than Europe really saw, if the good order of Charlemagne's empire could have been maintained.

One further step appeared to give the highest sanction to his government, and to secure its permanence beyond question. His dominion was now about equal in area to the old Roman empire of the West. It would represent to the people of his day all that tradition would tell them of that older empire. It would give to them the order and security which that had given, and which had since been wanting. What could be more natural, therefore, to them or to him, since at that time territorial titles had not come into use, than to desire the only title which history could furnish by which to rule such diverse lands? National king he might be of his own Franks, he might be crowned with the iron crown of the Lombards, but what series of titles would gain him respect and obedience in such wide and separate lands as he now held subject—lands won from the Greek empire, from Mohammedan Arabs, from heathen Saxons, from hated Huns and Avars and Slaves? What *title would seem to* such different peoples to unite *them all together as* members of one and the same

realm? The title of Roman emperor alone could do this. And so the natural step was taken, and, on Christmas day, 800, the Pope placed on the head of Charles, as he was praying in the old Church of St. Peter's in Rome, the imperial crown, and hailed him emperor of Rome. The Western empire existed once more in fact as well as in theory. It is very easy for us to know that it was in no sense of the word a Roman empire, but it is much more important for us to be able to put ourselves in the place of the men of those days, and to understand their feeling that in very truth the Western Roman empire had been restored.

The consequences of this step were of immediate and permanent importance. It no doubt placed the authority of Charlemagne over his conquests on a firmer basis by transferring to him much of the awe and reverence with which the name of Cæsar would still be remembered even in regions over which no real Cæsar had ever ruled.

Its more important effects were upon later times, and these were twofold. First, its influence was of very great importance in strengthening and developing that theory of the mediæval empire which we have before explained. Here appears once more a widely extended empire, which links itself in name and all associations with the old Roman empire. It appears, too, in close alliance with an ecclesiastical empire of equally wide extent, with which it appears to divide the sovereignty of the Western world. It forms a point, also, to which, in after generations of *disorder,* men look back as a time of order and

security, as they had once looked back to the Roman empire. It brings before the minds of men once more, as conspicuous facts, what might otherwise have dropped out of the realm of remembrance, or of theory into oblivion. Without it, no doubt, the second revival of the Roman empire, a century and a half later, under Otto the Great, and the whole mediæval theory of the empire would have been impossible.

In the second place, it had a great effect upon the unifying of Europe. For a short time, in the midst of confusion, a real political unity is created and maintained. The forces of disruption are for the moment held in check, the divided fragments are brought together; and, though it is but for a moment, the effect is never lost.

But, as an attempt to secure settled and permanent order, from which a new civilization might speedily arise, the work of Charlemagne did not succeed. Could he himself have lived longer, the forces that were tearing society asunder would most likely have proved too strong even for his genius to overcome. They certainly were too strong for his less vigorous descendants, and centuries of confusion followed his death.

CHAPTER VI.

ATTEMPTS AT NATIONAL ORGANIZATION.

THE attempt of Charlemagne to establish an empire which should give permanent order and security to Europe had failed. The empire had broken in pieces, and the order and security were wanting. But society would find itself none the less certainly impelled toward some other method of securing civil order, and, in the centuries of confusion which follow, we see, wherever they were possible, new attempts to gain this necessary end. These are found in the movements, unconscious most likely, which now manifest themselves in so many countries of Europe toward a new national life and organization. The days of the invasions are over. The "wander-time" is past. The newcomers have settled down to permanent residence upon their conquests, and have made themselves new homes; and these are attempts to form governments which may give expression to a common, organic life, and be able to exercise a real control throughout the territories subject to each—attempts premature as yet, but no less certain to be made whenever an opportunity offers.

The most important movement of this sort was in Germany. The natural separation of Germany from what is now France, the signs of which had begun to manifest themselves in earlier times, could not be prevented by any artificial means. By the beginning of the tenth century this separation had

become complete and final. The two peoples had grown apart from one another in languages, in feelings, and in all the more important points which distinguish nations. The Germans to the east of the Rhine, occupying a country in which the Romans had never permanently established themselves, and in which there were no foreign elements to mingle with and change their own native civilization, formed a homogeneous society out of which a genuine national government should have developed. At the beginning of the tenth century they chose for themselves a national king in Henry the Fowler, Duke of the Saxons, a descendant of the Saxon hero, Widukind, who had been the soul of the national cause against Charlemagne. He and his son Otto, the last during the earlier part of his reign at least, ruled wisely as national kings, and everything seemed to promise the speedy growth of a compact and orderly German nation. They had a national cause against the savage Hungarians, who were continually making plundering inroads into the kingdom; cities were built, the people were encouraged to adopt a town life, and commerce was increased; a check on the power of the great dukes—that is, a check on the tendency to split the commonwealth into little, independent fragments—was provided in the palatine counts; the frontier was defended or enlarged, and turbulent vassals were subdued. But, alas! the phantom of the dead empire from the banks of the Tiber beckoned Otto, and he went to Rome to be crowned. The same spell fastened itself upon his successors,

and in their frequent and long absences in Italy, and, from the greater interest which they took in the lofty pretensions of the Roman empire than in the less magnificent realities of the German kingdom, the opportunity was given the great vassals to establish their local tyrannies on a firm basis, and to obtain, finally, a virtual independence. The feudal system was carried to its logical conclusion, the country was broken into innumerable fragments, and all hope of a united German nation passed away till after long and terrible centuries.

On the other side of the Rhine, in what is now France, the German conquerors, always much less numerous than their Romanized subjects, had begun to identify themselves with the latter, and to become Romanized themselves to some extent. A new language began to be formed out of a corrupted Latin. The new people began to distinguish themselves from the pure Germans to the east, and by their struggles to gain a national king against the descendants of Charlemagne, who represented the German side of the nation, efforts finally successful under Hugh Capet, in 987, they seemed to be entering on the proper course of national development. But this was the Fatherland of the feudal system. Here it most rapidly reached its maturity. Hugh Capet and his immediate successors possessed but the shadow of authority outside their royal domains. It might be, even, that an insolent baron could, with impunity, render it unsafe for the king to use his customary road from one domain to another. So that it was only after long centuries of struggle

by the kings against the power of the feudal nobles that any central power came to exist capable of enforcing its authority everywhere, and of furnishing permanent civil order.

In England, still earlier, Wessex had brought under her rule all the other Saxon kingdoms. In the ninth century, under the wise statesmanship of Alfred the Great, whose efforts resembled those of Charlemagne in many ways, a nation seemed about to be formed. The law was codified and enlarged; the provincial and judicial systems were improved; the military organization was strengthened and the military duties of the people rendered more definite; and learning and literature were greatly encouraged. But there came immediately the Danish invasion—a new deluge of barbarism sweeping over the land. This was barely over, and the Danes scarcely absorbed, when it was followed by the Norman conquest, a new influx of foreign elements, and so the day of the English nation was postponed.

Nowhere else in Europe were such attempts possible. Spain was still under the power of the Saracens, and the little Christian states which were winning the territory back, inch by inch, bore more resemblance still to permanent camps than to organized nations. To Italy, the dream of the Roman empire was as much of a curse as to Germany, and here, too, it effectually prevented the growth of any central power.

So, everywhere, these movements toward that *form of political* organization which seems to us the

most normal and regular fail to establish anything permanent. They are premature. Chaos is still too strong. Society is still too fragmentary to render any real national life possible.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FEUDAL SYSTEM.

BUT if in none of the natural and ordinary ways can civil order be obtained, some temporary means will certainly be found to secure it. This was found for mediæval Europe in the feudal system—a system which became the principal organization of society through the action of those very causes which had prevented the formation of more natural organizations, and in this system those causes almost everywhere found their expression.

If we assert that the feudal system is not a natural form of organization for society, we use the term natural with a special meaning which needs to be stated. By a natural form of organization we intend any form through which an orderly society finds itself impelled to express its organic life. But in this period there was no orderly society, no organic life. Society was disorderly, disorganized, fragmentary. A feudal form of organization seems frequently, perhaps usually, to be the product of such a state of society. It is not confined to the middle ages, nor to Europe. Other times and *other lands* have produced similar forms of organi-

zation in like circumstances. For an unjointed and insecure state of things, for times of prevailing violence and anarchy, when no generally obeyed central authority exists, it seems a thoroughly natural form of organization. It can only be called unnatural from the fact that a thoroughly orderly, normal society would never produce it.

Nor, in giving the feudal system this place in the chronological order of progress, is it meant that the feudal forms make their appearance for the first time in the period which we have now reached. There seems to have been an unbroken succession of these forms from the days of the Roman empire, through the times of the Merovingian and Carolingian kings, to the tenth century. It is meant that now these forms take possession of society, and, in the absence of any central authority, furnish society with its only organization.

As to the forms under which the feudal spirit manifested itself, the outward shape which it took as an organization, it seems very certain that these did not result from the German conquest, and that, in the beginning, they possessed no military character. They no doubt originated in methods of bestowing and renting lands which were in use under the Roman empire, and which continued unchanged during all the times of the German invasions. According to these methods, the owner of an estate in fee would bestow it, for a fixed period, never permanently, upon some one else, who entered *into possession* of the estate and its income, *being in some way* subject to the owner, with per-

haps no loss of status, or making him some return, though not the same that he would have made for a rented estate. An estate bestowed in this way was called a *precarium*, later a benefice. Or the small proprietor, unable to protect his rights in times of confusion, would surrender his estate to some powerful neighbor in return for protection, and would receive it back from him as a benefice.

To this must be added, as a source of the feudal forms, the more personal relation of patron and client, known to early Roman history, found in Gaul when it was conquered by the Romans, and existing under the Roman empire. The client was personally subject to his patron in return for protection and maintenance. The entire relation of the client to the state was through his patron. By the act of commendation the weak freeman submitted himself personally to a patron in return for the protection which he could not give himself. This act was common during the times of the German migration.

Practices of the sort described in relation to land were unknown in Germany, but, in the spirit of loyalty, in the strong tie of personal devotion which bound the German warriors to their chief, we have a relation similar to that of patron and client, though different in its origin and meaning. The Germans, finding these customs in the society which they conquered, readily understood and adopted them, gradually adding their own ideas; and from these sources, the benefice and the patronage, the Roman methods and the German spirit,

come the forms of the feudal system in relation to land, and the personal connection between lord and vassal.

It was in Gaul that these Roman practices had especially prevailed, and Gaul became the nursery of the feudal system.

As to the causes of the spirit rather than of the forms, the spirit which gave the feudal system its hold upon society, they are to be found in the confusion of the times, the disruption of society, the difficulty of communication, the absence of general ideas, the narrowing of sight and interest. The strong man, the baron of the neighborhood, could give some degree of protection and security. The central authority, which nominally governed the state, could give none. Therefore, whatever, near the strong man's castle, needed security, submitted itself to him in return for his protection. His subjects looked to him for government rather than to the central authority, and for the protection of his dependents and the defense of his own rights he trusted mainly to his sword. In this way little local dominions were built up everywhere. In reality, feudalism may be said to have been the triumph of the individual over society, of the local over the general.

And yet it was to a certain extent organic. Whatever organization there was in society came to be through its forms. The kings, the cities, the Church entered into the system. According to its perfected theory, to which the facts approached more or less nearly, perhaps nowhere entirely, the king is

the owner of the land of the kingdom. This he parcels out in large fiefs to the great nobles, who in return are to do him certain services, generally of a military nature. They, in the same manner and on similar conditions, divide the fiefs they have received among their own vassals, and so on down to the knight's fee, which was of a size large enough to support and arm a single horseman—the knight.

Having fulfilled the conditions on which he held his fief, and respected whatever obligations he had entered into toward his own vassals, the lord of the fief was then supreme within his own domains, responsible to no one for his actions. In him centered all administrative and judicial functions for the territory under his control. His virtual prerogative was even more than this. He might declare war and make peace. He might enter into offensive and defensive alliances with other vassals, or even with powers outside the particular kingdom to which he belonged. He might coin money, and grant charters, and, in general, perform all the acts of sovereignty. If strong enough, he might venture on open opposition to his lord, even though it were the king. He might neglect his lord's summons to perform the services by which he held his fief. He might refuse obedience to the decisions of his courts. He might even make war upon him, or, shut up in his strong castle, defy his power. The whole tendency of the feudal system was to divide the country up into a number of nearly independent fragments, mutually hostile, and connected but *slightly* with any central government.

Yet it was, as we have said, to a certain extent an organic system. There was at least the form of a bond uniting the parts into a general whole, and it certainly kept alive the theory of a central organization, having the right to rule over the whole, so that it was ready at hand to be carried over from the realm of theory into that of fact when the time for it should come. It gave some degree of order and security. It had a regular judicial system of its own. It held the lord to some degree of responsibility for the acts of those subject to him, and it required every man to have some lord who should be responsible for his good behavior. It created political rights, and taught respect for them. It has been called a protest of barbarism against itself, and we may call it a barbarous and temporary means of obtaining some slight civil order until the more natural means of organizing society can be put into operation.

The work of the feudal system in this direction, and the way in which it came to be regarded after this work was finished—the feeling in regard to it with which we are more familiar—may be illustrated by the rise and fate of the feudal castles. We are familiar with the intense hatred which was shown toward these buildings in the various peasant wars, and even in more recent times. But, when first built, these castles were for the common protection of all against the sudden inroads of plundering and merciless enemies. They were a blessing to the communities in which they were placed, like the block-house or fort in colonial times; and, when one

was destroyed, it was rebuilt as soon as possible by the willing labor of all. It was only when the need of such special places of defense had passed away, by the growth of general security, that the castles came to be hated as the strongholds of wrong and oppression.

In addition to this, the feudal constitution of society was one well calculated to preserve and develop the original German idea of individual independence. As the Greek and Roman societies embodied the opposite extreme, the subordination of the individual to the state, so feudalism embodied this equally extreme principle, the subordination of the state to the individual. That the idea of the rights of the individual man as against the state has been brought into our political consciousness so clearly and definitely as it has, and has been given its proper weight in modern society, is largely due to the way in which the feudal system preserved this idea, and gave it outward form in an actual political organization.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE EMPIRE AND THE CHURCH.

DURING these centuries, while the real organization of society remained in the hands of the feudal system, and before the nations had formed themselves, the two powers which have been before described—the Holy Roman empire and the Papal Church—became perfected in theory, and the power

actually exercised by the latter did indeed become imperial.

The Western empire had been revived by the genius and energy of Charlemagne, but the genius and energy necessary to maintain it did not pass on to his successors. Of his legitimate descendants, five, in the space of about seventy-five years, bore the imperial title, and of these, two, the first and the last, with the title also held sway over the whole, or nearly the whole, of the territories which Charlemagne had governed. But they had not the ability to make their power respected throughout their dominions, much less to create a permanent central authority. In Germany, the family soon became extinct, and in France they could only maintain a losing struggle against the rising power of the Capetian family.

Perhaps we may say that after Charlemagne, certainly after his immediate successors, the Western empire again fell into abeyance, for, although there was an almost constant succession of titular emperors, there was a constant decline in their real power, till at last the title came to be held by petty Italian princes, and to be regarded as the prize of victory in petty Italian squabbles.

When, therefore, Otto the First, the German king, whose orderly and well-governed kingdom would, on a somewhat smaller scale, recall the days of Charlemagne, descended into Italy at the call of the Pope, who had need of his assistance against *some Italian enemies* of his, and was crowned by *him as emperor, in 962*, it was in reality a second

revival of the Western empire. From this time on to the beginning of the present century, when Francis II. surrendered the title at the dictation of Napoleon, the title of Emperor of Rome remained with the German kings; and the mediæval theory of the empire, which has been already explained, grew to its perfected form under the Franconian and Hohenstaufen houses in the three centuries which follow Otto's time.

We can easily see that the act of Otto was a mistake; that it prevented the growth of a German nation; that it plunged the race into centuries of bloodshed and misery, and all for the idlest dream. But we must not lay the blame wholly upon the blind ambition of the king. We must remember that the consent of the whole people went with him; that it was to them, as well as to him, a matter of pride and joy that the head of the nation should bear the title of the lord of the world; and that neither they nor he could possibly have dreamed of the disastrous consequences that were to follow, nor could they have been made to see that the title which they coveted was nothing but an empty name.

But however immense the cost may have been to Germany and to Italy, to Europe at large, and to civilization, this empty title brought some compensating gains. Besides the work already indicated as accomplished by this theoretical Roman empire—the assistance which it gave in the uniting of the Europe of the middle ages into a common whole—there was another work performed by it of scarcely *less* importance.

The two centuries which follow Otto may be said to have been, in one particular at least, the crisis of European history. The character of her whole future development hung then in the balance. For, in those days of turbulence and disorder, there was one danger to which the civilization that was finally to issue from the middle ages was always exposed. It was the danger that some power should arise strong and masterful enough to subdue all Europe under itself, and to erect a despotism which should crush out all variety and individuality of development, and reduce the Western world to the dead level, the lifeless uniformity of an Asiatic empire. The alternative can not be better expressed than in the words of Gervinus, translated by another.

"If it had been possible for the empire and the papacy to have united peaceably; if that which had already occurred in the Byzantine kingdom of the East could also have occurred in the Teutonic Roman kingdom of the West, and could the combined secular and spiritual power have rested on one head, the idea of unity would have gained the preponderance over that of national developments, and in the center of this quarter of the world, in Germany or Italy, a monarchical power and single form of government would have been constructed, which would have thrown the utmost difficulties in the way of the national and human progression of the whole of Europe."

As actual circumstances were, the greatest danger in this direction arose from the papacy. The theory of the empire was always but little regarded

outside its own proper territory, and those who held its title never acquired great European influence till the time of such danger was past. But the papacy always exercised a European influence, and mighty men of genius were soon to fill its throne, who should actually stretch out their hands to seize the political supremacy of Europe, and almost succeed in their attempt. The papacy has been described as "the ghost of the deceased Roman empire, sitting crowned on the grave thereof." But the papacy was a living spirit as compared with the imaginary empire. This was the ghost of the old empire sitting crowned on its own grave. But the phantom empire had its work to do. To the ignorant children of those days it represented God's temporal government of the world, and to us the belief is possible that to its guardianship Providence had committed the political development of the future. At any rate, the defense of Europe against the plans of the papacy fell to the German emperors of the Holy Roman empire, and it is largely to them that we owe it, and to those struggles which cost Germany and Italy so dear, that our modern development has been one of variety in unity rather than one of mere dead uniformity.

To the power from which this danger arose we are now to turn, and to witness its final organization into a strong monarchy by one of the greatest of the popes.

Since last we looked at the papacy in detail, it has made the most out of the alliance with the Caro-

lingians; it has invented, or has had invented for it, those two great fictions—Constantine's Donation and the Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals; by the vigorous and successful reign of Nicholas I., and by the lofty claims of his immediate successors, it has prepared itself to pass uninjured through the darkness and mire of the tenth century—a century which witnessed its deepest degradation and corruption, and saw its European power and influence almost completely lost; and it has emerged from the terrible ordeal of that period with not a precedent forgotten and not a claim diminished. And now, under the direction of one of the ablest minds of the middle ages, it enters upon the last stage of its development.

This great ecclesiastical statesman was Hildebrand, who became Pope Gregory VII., in 1073. For some years before he actually became Pope he had, to all intents, controlled the papacy. He had seen it raised out of its degradation, from being the prize of town broils and the gift of harlots, to its old position of influence and power, by the German popes who had been appointed by the Emperor Henry III. At least as early as the accession of Leo IX., in 1048, he had begun to exercise a directing influence over the papal policy.

It is possible that we may be able now, knowing as we do its historical development, to state the plan of Hildebrand somewhat more clearly and definitely than he could have done himself; that he did not *see before him in* all its completeness the system *which he created.* But there can be no doubt that

this plan was clearly enough before his mind, that he understood well enough the system necessary to an imperial Church to enable him to start its development in the right direction, to do just the right things to give actual existence to such a Church.

The ultimate purpose was to form the Church into an absolute monarchy, thoroughly organized from the highest rank to the lowest, self-centered, and entirely independent of any temporal government—indeed, the superior of all temporal governments. In order to accomplish this purpose, three points must be gained.

First, the Church must be able to choose its own head, must have the power to select the man who is to govern it and to shape its policy, without interference on the part either of the Roman people or of the Roman emperors. Both these methods of selecting the Pope would be within the remembrance of Hildebrand, and either would be fatal to his purpose. This step he practically accomplished before he became Pope, through the law of Nicholas II., in 1059, by which the choice of pope was to remain in the college of cardinals. This was not gained without opposition, nor was it perfectly gained at once; but gained it was, and this method of choosing the Pope, with some modifications of form, has remained in use to the present time. Though he met with opposition here, this point was easily secured in comparison with the two that follow.

Secondly, the clergy must be devoted only to

the interests of the Church. All ties which would divide their interests, which would give them other objects to live for, to labor for, must be broken. They must plan for no future but the future of the Church. To accomplish this end, the strictest celibacy must be enforced, and about this Gregory went with a stern determination, which the most violent opposition and the most passionate entreaty did not for a moment shake. And the opposition which he met with on this point was certainly most violent. From very early times there had been a growing opinion that the clergy should be unmarried, and councils and popes had heretofore tried to enforce celibacy, but never with complete success. In many dioceses, and even countries, marriage was the general rule, and from the married clergy he could expect only the bitterest opposition. But he set about the task of enforcing celibacy with a vigor never before equaled, and with an earnestness that would admit no compromise. He did not live himself to see the victory completely gained, but it was at last gained.

In the third place, this union of all the interests of the clergy with those of the Church must be made still more intimate and close. The clergy must be wholly separated from the temporal governments under which they live. They must be in no way dependent upon the prince; the prince must have no means of control over them. The Pope must be their only monarch, and Rome their *only capital. Simony*—the purchase of promotion or *of office in the Church*—was everywhere prevalent

at this time. It must utterly cease. The Church, too, had entered into the feudal system. Numerous and extensive fiefs were in the hands of the clergy. But, so long as the organization of society was chiefly feudal, these fiefs represented duties to be performed to the suzerain, the lord of the fief, and, on the other hand, they gave to the suzerain certain rights of control. In many cases it might be a question of vital importance to the state into whose hands such large portions of its territory should pass. There was thus a certain justice about the claim which the sovereigns set up to make appointments to bishoprics. But this Gregory could not allow, and so here his plan came into violent collision with the civil power, particularly with that power which mediæval theory had placed side by side with him as his divinely appointed partner in the government of the world. Other conflicting claims and mutual jealousies were not wanting, and that struggle now began between the empire and the papacy whose results for civilization we have already noticed.

A less resolute mind than Gregory's might well have drawn back at the prospect, but there was no hesitation on his part. He entered upon the fearful contest with all his unflinching vigor. Notwithstanding his apparently brilliant victory at Canosa, where the humiliated emperor abjectly begged for pardon, Gregory can hardly be said to have succeeded in this part of his plan, nor was it ever achieved by his successors as thoroughly as he *could have* wished.

On the whole, however, and in his main intentions, he did succeed. By his success the lofty pretensions and wonderful achievements of Innocent III., at the end of the next century, when the papacy reached its highest point of actual power, were rendered possible. That the same lofty claims, when asserted by Boniface VIII., a century later still, failed to be made good, was owing to the fact that in the mean time a great change had taken place in Europe. The process of unifying had begun to show results; new languages had been formed; new nations had arisen; the European mind had begun to awaken; the mediæval was taking the first step toward the modern. This long and slow revolution it now becomes necessary to describe, and the first step in it is the crusades.

But as to the personal character of Pope Gregory, we have no wish to imply that he was actuated solely by selfish ambition, or by a determination to erect an absolute papal monarchy at no matter what cost to society or to religion. It is easy to imagine his life governed by motives which in themselves, as mere motives, were good and noble; to suppose that he believed, with all his soul, that through the triumph of his plans only could the greatest good come to society and the mission of the Christian religion be best fulfilled. His words as he lay dying at Salerno—"I have loved justice and hated iniquity, and therefore I die in exile"—may be believed sincere, and may be taken as an indication of *his personal character*—a character not infrequent *in history, which* imagines its own plans to be the

plans of God, and itself, and all the instruments it may use, as the heaven-directed means to these great ends.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CRUSADES.

WITHIN the centuries over which we have passed in our survey, a new religion has arisen in Arabia, from the teachings of Mahomet, in the second quarter of the seventh century—a religion whose rise and rapid spread should occupy no small space in any extended history of civilization. Under the impulse imparted by this new faith, which had created a nation out of their scattered tribes, the Arabs had entered upon a remarkable career of conquest. Within less than a hundred years they had conquered a considerable part of the old Roman empire and wide realms beyond it.

In 711 they had landed in Spain, and had immediately overthrown the kingdom of the Visigoths. Then, crossing the Pyrenees, they had threatened for a moment to spread their conquests over all Europe, and to extinguish Western civilization and the Christian faith. But the victory which Charles Martel had won at Tours had checked their career, and they found themselves confined to the Spanish peninsula. The fuller account of their civilization and its influence is to come later. It suffices here to say that in Spain they had built up a rapid and *luxurious* civilization. They had founded numer-

ous universities and libraries, and stood ready to become the school-masters of Europe whenever it should begin to desire instruction.

In their eastern dominions a similar civilization had been developed, some features of which have been made familiar to us through the Arabian Nights, but it was doomed to a more speedy extinction before the arms of another Mahometan race, the Seljuk Turks, a Tartar tribe, who conquered the eastern Saracens, and, in 1076, captured Jerusalem.

To all the mediæval world, Mahometan as well as Christian, a pilgrimage seemed a most natural and praiseworthy act of piety. To a member of the mediæval Church, with its ideas of Christianity, nothing could seem more desirable, or more effective in releasing him from his sins, than a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre. While the Saracens ruled over Palestine, such pilgrims had found no special obstacles in their way. The Saracens were of a liberal and tolerant disposition, and had rather protected the pilgrims, and granted them privileges, than hindered their pious designs. So that, though here and there Pope or zealous monk had felt the indignity which Christendom suffered in allowing the Holy Land to remain under the foot of the infidel, there was but little prospect that Europe could be made to feel it also, until Jerusalem fell into the hands of new masters. The Seljuk Turks were a barbarous and savage people, and, instead of the *favorable conditions* which pilgrims had formerly *enjoyed, they were* now subjected to every indig-

nity and insult which ingenious cruelty could invent. Returning pilgrims related the horrible barbarities which they had endured. Peter the Hermit, with the sanction of the Pope, appealed to princes and people with his wild eloquence, till finally Europe, crying, "It is the will of God," arose as by a common impulse to conquer the Holy Land from the hands of the unbeliever.

It does not belong to our purpose to relate the history of the various attempts which were made to create and maintain a Christian dominion in Palestine during the two centuries and more that follow, but rather, having indicated the causes which led to the crusades, to sketch at once their results for civilization.

Whatever view we may take of history as a whole, the crusades must be considered a great epoch. With the view which we have taken, they mark the turning-point of mediæval history. A great common movement of the European peoples, undertaken from common motives and for common purposes, they are at once a sign that a European unity has begun to form itself, that a Christendom is taking its rise, and they are a powerful force in carrying on that process of formation. They indicate, to a certain extent, the passing away of the individual and the local, and the rise of the general and the common. They are but little more than finished when the nations are found to have arisen, and the feudal system, as a form of organization for society, to have passed away. Indeed, in almost *every* department of civilization their influence was

felt for good, and, if any dark ages may be said to have existed at all, their end must be dated at the crusades.

They gave the advantages of travel to the people of Europe. They brought them into contact with higher civilizations than their own, in the Greek empire and among the Saracens, and thus broke down their narrow self-conceit, broadened and liberalized their minds, and taught them the common humanity of all races, the brotherhood of man.

They increased and developed commerce temporarily by the need of transportation for men and supplies, permanently by the introduction of many new articles of use and luxury. Connection between Europe and the remoter East, India and China, began during this period. Travels to distant lands in search of information or of commercial profit became more frequent. All the chief countries of Asia, the Central Africa of those days, were visited by European travelers and merchants, and Mongolians appear at the European courts.

The work of the crusades in helping to do away with the feudal system, whose mission was now drawing to an end, was by no means slight. Many of the feudal nobles were compelled to sell their lands to obtain the means for these expeditions, and a portion of the lands thus sold passed into the hands of wealthy merchants and citizens. The crusading experiences also created a taste for city and court life, in opposition to the more local and isolated life natural to feudalism; and, by the intro-

duction of general ideas and by the growth of general interests, the feudal system was weakened.

Perhaps the most important effect of the crusades was the assistance which they gave in awakening the European mind; not that they began this awakening, nor that without them it would not have occurred, but they gave an impulse to thought and to learning which was of the greatest value. From this time on there is an increasing intellectual activity, a growth of real learning throughout the West.

Between the crusades, as the turning point of the middle ages, and the Reformation, as the movement in which that period of the world's history comes to an end, we may trace the development of civilization most easily along four principal lines.

First, the revival of learning, the beginning and growth of science, and the Renaissance.

Second, the development of commerce and the rise of the free cities.

Third, the formation of nations and the organization of national governments.

Fourth, the decline of the papal power and the increasing desire for a more spiritual Christianity.

These, as we said at the beginning, of all lines along which historical progress takes place, are closely connected together. They act and react upon each other. The advances along one line are always aiding those along the others, and we are justified in distinguishing them from each other in *this way* only in order to obtain a more comprehen-

sive and easily remembered outline of the general movement which characterizes the time.

These we shall now take up and follow through the period in the order in which we have here given them, striving to indicate, as best we can, how the progress along one line influenced that along each of the others.

CHAPTER X.

THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING.

IT was nothing more than natural that learning should be almost extinguished during the centuries that preceded the crusades. With the destruction of leisure and quiet, with the overwhelming influx of ignorance and superstition that came with the German invasions, with the almost entire forgetting of Greek throughout the West, and the disfavor into which the Latin classic writers fell with many of the leading churchmen, it could not be otherwise than that learning should be at its lowest ebb.

But there is abundant evidence to show that, notwithstanding all its ignorance, the human mind was still active. Though superstitious and narrow and ignorant, it was still, without doubt, that intellect in its infancy which was by and by to do such great things. This may be seen in that vast literature of legends concerning saints and martyrs which the middle ages produced—certainly the imagination was active enough during those days—in the huge dogmatic system which they built up, and in

the numerous gladiatorial combats they exhibit between the orthodox and heretics of all sorts. What other subjects than such as these were there with which, under the circumstances in which it found itself placed, the mediæval mind could occupy itself? Again, no small degree of intellectual activity was required to build up the ecclesiastical system and to develop the canon law. The False Decretals are a typical production of mediæval times. Displaying the densest ignorance, bristling with mistakes which the school-boy of to-day might detect, they yet give evidence of much mental keenness and activity.

But this fact is seen most clearly when we approach that system of philosophy which arose to its long dominion over the mind of Europe during the period of the crusades, and which is so characteristic of the times—the system which we call scholasticism.

This philosophy has often been the butt against which fine wits and the writers of striking phrases have pointed their shafts; but what else than it was possible? With almost no knowledge of what the human mind had accomplished in the past, unable to detect even the grossest historical errors, with no conception of the study of nature, with no possibility of critical exegesis, compelled to accept as infallible certain articles of faith, what else could be expected of the European mind when suddenly it awoke to a consciousness of its powers and began to long to exercise them? With no materials of thought, abstruse speculation and minute logic in which the processes were everything, and the results

to be reached comparatively nothing, these were all that was possible to an eager mind of the twelfth century. As Lord Bacon says, in the "Advancement of Learning": "This kind of degenerate learning did chiefly reign among the schoolmen, who—having sharp and strong wits, and abundance of leisure, and small variety of reading, but their wits being shut up in the cells of a few authors (chiefly Aristotle their dictator), as their persons were shut up in the cells of monasteries and colleges, and knowing little history, either of nature or time—did, out of no great quantity of matter and infinite agitation of wit, spin out unto us those laborious webs of learning which are extant in their books. For the wit and mind of man, if it work upon matter, which is the contemplation of the creatures of God, worketh according to the stuff and is limited thereby; but if it work upon itself, as the spider worketh his web, then it is endless, and brings forth, indeed, cobwebs of learning, admirable for the fineness of thread and work, but of no substance or profit."

It does not belong within these limits to indicate the true position or influence of scholasticism in the history of philosophy. It may be said, however, of its more general place in the history of civilization, that it is at once a sign of the awakening in the European mind of a desire for a more vigorous life, and also a force in bringing in that life. With its thousands of students passing rapidly from one university to another, rushing into the wilderness to be near this great teacher in his exile, or filling Oxford or Paris to listen to that other in his

glory, with its interminable volumes of philosophy and theology, with its Nominalism and Realism, with its Books of Sentences and its hair-splitting logic, this is what it means. It is the struggling endeavor of the great mind of Europe, now conscious of itself, to find the light whose direction even it can not guess. It is the first great step in the revival of learning.

But in the centuries between its beginning and its ending other events have occurred. The modern languages have arisen, and, in the building up of national literatures, mind is to find a new resource. The universities have been founded, and have brought in their train new subjects of investigation and a wider range of studies, and the physical sciences have taken their first faltering steps.

The importance of those modern languages which are derived from the Latin will justify us in pointing out very briefly the chief transformations by means of which they were formed from the ancient language.

They were formed, not from the classic written language of the empire, but from the colloquial, vulgar Latin which existed as a spoken language side by side with the classic Latin. In this spoken language, many of the changes which were to give rise to the modern languages had begun to show themselves long before the days of the Barbarian invasions. The settlement of the Germans in the provinces, where this vulgar, and no doubt provincialized, Latin was spoken, rendered these changes

more violent and thoroughgoing than they might otherwise have been.

The chief changes by which the modern languages were formed were the following:

First, the dropping of inflectional endings, and the substitution for them of prepositions and auxiliary words. For instance, the genitive case came to be indicated by the preposition *de*, and *habere—avoir*—came to be used in the formation of tenses. It was easier for the foreigner and the uneducated man to remember the one preposition, *de*, than to remember all the various genitive endings of the Latin nouns.

Second, changes in words themselves by contraction and change of pronunciation and spelling. Changes of this sort had begun in the spoken Latin, but they were naturally carried much further by the influence of the Germans, who would be ignorant of pronunciation and spelling. A good example of this is furnished by our word uncle—French, *oncle*—from the Latin *avunculus*, in which the original Latin root has disappeared and the termination only has been retained.

Third, the translation by the Germans of their native idioms into Latin words. These German idioms would be, of course, unknown to the Latin, and their introduction would force words into new uses. Perhaps the use of the demonstrative pronoun *ille*, in some languages its first, and in others its last syllable, as an article belongs here. Our word country—French, *contrée*—has been given as an example of this. The German word for country

was *gegend*, formed from the preposition *gegen*, meaning against; so the Germans, instead of using the Latin word *regio*, translated *gegend* by a word formed from *contra*, the Latin preposition which corresponded to *gegen*.

These were the principal changes by which the modern Latin or Romance languages were formed, and we may say in general that they make their appearance as new languages in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

It is probable that at no time during the middle ages was Europe entirely without schools. In the first centuries of the Christian era under the Roman empire free public schools had been maintained in the cities and towns. Provision was made by the state for the payment of the teachers; certain privileges and immunities were also attached to their positions, and they formed an honored and influential class of citizens. The chief object of the teaching in these schools was to form the orator, and the schools of Gaul were especially famous for their success.

In the fifth century these schools fell into rapid decay before the Frankish conquests and the increasing Christianization of the people; for the Christians, not unnaturally, considering the time, looked with disfavor upon pagan schools and the study of pagan authors. As these schools passed away, their place was taken by cathedral and monastic schools, under the direction of the clergy. In these the course of study was based upon that of

the older public schools, but everything was given a theological aim, and the object always kept in view was the education of priests.

These schools were greatly increased and strengthened by Charlemagne, who endeavored to build up a permanent educational system throughout his empire, and they continued to exist and to flourish under his immediate successors.

By the middle of the tenth century, perhaps even earlier, there had arisen in the minds of some a desire for wider knowledge than could be gained in Christian Europe, and, led by this desire, they had visited the Arabian schools in Spain and southern Italy, and, from that time on, an increasing number sought in those schools the advantages for study which were not to be found elsewhere. Many of those thus educated, on their return to Christendom, established schools of their own, in which they taught to others the learning they had acquired. Such a one was Gerbert, who established a school at Rheims in the tenth century, and astonished his contemporaries by setting up a steam organ, and by other wonderful contrivances. Certainly his mathematical and astronomical knowledge, whether learned among the Arabs or not, was remarkable. He was appointed Pope by the Emperor Otto III., in the year 999, and took the name of Sylvester II. His learning seemed so marvelous to the men of that day that he was popularly supposed to be a wizard, and it was reported that the devil finally carried *him off in a terrible* storm.

Under the influence of opposite feelings, it is

very easy, on the one hand, greatly to underestimate the influence of the Arabs on European civilization, and, on the other, to overestimate it as greatly. It is very likely impossible to point out that influence exactly, but we shall not be far wrong in stating the two most important features of it.

In the first place, the Arabs acted as the guardians, during the darkest ages, of much which the ancient world had gained. This was particularly true of the scientific work of the Greeks, for which the Arabs seem to have had a natural taste. The discoveries which the Greeks had made, the Arabs received from Europe, in the East, at a time when the Eastern mind was wholly occupied with abstruse theological speculations, and when the Western mind was sunk in ignorance. These results of ancient civilization they brought back to Europe, in the West, and, when the European mind became capable of advance once more, they returned to it the results which the past had gained.

This may be well illustrated in the case of Aristotle. However authoritative the name of Aristotle may have been during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, it was only his logic which had been known. His scientific works are first brought to the knowledge of the West, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, through Latin translations made from Arabic versions of those works. Nor was it always the case that the Arabic translation was the only step between the Greek original and the Latin version. Renan has given us a good statement of the *number* of links which sometimes connected the

knowledge of the West with the work of the Greeks, in reminding us, when we are disposed to find fault with the crudities of the Arabian philosopher Averroës, that the editions of his works furnish us only a Latin translation of a Hebrew translation of the commentary which he made upon an Arabic translation of a Syriac translation of the Greek text.

In the second place, with their great universities and libraries, the Arabians stood ready to afford to Europe that means of instruction which it might not have found elsewhere.

To these two points must be added the fact that in some branches of learning, especially in the sciences, Arabian students made considerable additions of their own to the stock of previous knowledge. But these, though very valuable in the several lines of investigation to which they relate, were of little importance to general civilization when compared with the other services mentioned.

Later than the first influence of the Arabs, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the quickening influence of the crusades upon learning began to be felt. Comparatively speaking, the crusades may have added but little to the stock of European knowledge, but they taught the people of the West that there were others in the world much more enlightened than themselves; and, indirectly, in the broadening and liberalizing of mind, their effect upon the advancement of knowledge was not slight.

At the beginning of the thirteenth century the *universities* were organized, and speedily rose to *importance.* Founded, in most cases, upon pre-

viously existing schools by royal or papal charters granting them special privileges, and by the assignment to them of revenues and endowments, mostly those already belonging to the Church, for the support of instruction and the maintenance of poor scholars, they speedily became places of resort where students from all quarters of Europe came together and lived in common.

According to a not uncommon mediæval practice of exaggeration, the number of students at these universities has been greatly overstated, until the numbers said to have assembled at Oxford and at Paris reached thirty thousand for each, and at Bologna thirteen thousand. It is no wonder that students of this period have confessed themselves unable to account for such numbers. According to the best evidence which we can now obtain, the number connected with any of the largest universities during the most flourishing period of mediæval learning is to be reckoned in hundreds rather than in thousands.

But even these numbers, so diminished, are large for the time, and the influence which the universities exerted, by means of their free, united student life, upon the development of a common Europe, is worthy of note in addition to their work for learning. By the way in which they brought together students of different nationalities, by the readiness with which they called distinguished scholars from one land to another, by their creation of a universal literary republic in which national distinctions, *though* not wholly laid aside, were yet softened,

they became a force opposed to all that was local and isolated, and in favor of the general and the common.

In the studies of the universities, theology and philosophy, of course, occupied the most prominent places, but new studies also began to attract attention to themselves. Faculties of medicine were here and there established, and those of Paris and Montpellier were very celebrated. Many steps were taken looking toward the study of the languages—Greek and Hebrew, and Arabic and Syriac even—long before the study was begun in any earnest way.

But with the beginning of the university system one new branch of learning rose to immediate importance—the study of the Roman law. The Roman law had never entirely passed out of use in the Latinized countries of Europe. It had remained in force side by side with the German codes; it had in some places largely supplanted them. It had exerted, also, a considerable influence on the formation of the canon law. But now it rises to new influence and importance in that revived study of which the university of Bologna was the chief seat.

The effect of this study in the political world was not slight. The Roman law was the code of an absolute monarchy, and its maxims—*Quod Principi placuit, legis habet vigorem*, "the will of the prince has the force of law," for example—were in favor of that absolute power which soon began to grow up on the ruins of the feudal system. But more important still was the rise of the lawyer class.

Hitherto the learning and the trained intellectual skill had all been among the clergy and in the service of the Church. From the ranks of the churchmen had come all the advisers of the kings, ministers of state, ambassadors, and diplomatists which the earlier times had demanded. Into their hands had been gathered all threads of state and interstate politics. But now arose another learned class. Able to combat the clergy with their own weapons, and thoroughly devoted to the monarchs, they rendered to their sovereigns most effective service in the contests which these now began to wage with the papal power, as well as in the building up of their absolute governments.

During these centuries, also, the physical sciences pass through their age of superstition, and, though they make but little actual advancement, here and there a great mind is found, and the way is prepared for future achievement. Beginning, we may almost say, in the service of magic, occupied chiefly with the search after philosophers' stones and elixirs of life, even such study of nature—and there was some little that was better than this—could hardly fail to stumble upon some facts and principles which would be of service when a more rational study should begin. One discovery, that of gunpowder, if, indeed, its use was not learned directly from the Arabs, had important practical consequences in aiding the overthrow of the feudal system.

With the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the period of the Renaissance, comes a still more rapid development of learning. Attention is especially

turned toward the study of the ancient languages and of history, and through these two closely related studies the world of those times is put into connection with the ancient world, and the mind of the fifteenth century is opened to the thought and achievement of classic days. Ancient manuscripts are eagerly sought for in every corner of Europe. The dusty libraries of old monasteries are everywhere ransacked; many a forgotten or despised and abused parchment turns out to be a treasure, and vigorous efforts are made to complete the works of the great classic writers by earnest scholars like Petrarch. The rapid advance of the Ottoman Turks drives many Greeks into the West, who, in order to support themselves, become teachers of Greek. Even earlier than this some earnest students had sought in Greek lands instruction in that language.

About the middle of the fifteenth century the invention of printing gave a great impulse to learning. In whatever way printing may have been invented, there can be no question of its immediate and wonderful extension throughout the West, or of the rapid multiplication of books. In Italy five thousand editions of books were published before the close of the fifteenth century, and the names of more than a thousand printers previous to 1500 have been preserved to us. The consequent cheapening of books brought them within the reach of thousands who had heretofore been unable to *procure them. It is* estimated that the price of *books was reduced to* one fourth the former price—

a reduction that would very many times more than quadruple the number of readers a book would have.

And then at the very end of the middle ages, under the favoring skies and fostering culture of Italy, art revives and fills the land with its divine creations—the works of Michael Angelo and Raphael, of Titian and Leonardo da Vinci.

The intense commercial activity which closed the middle ages was not without its effect on the Renaissance. As the great discoveries of those times widened the map of the world and opened new realms to the awakened enterprise of Europe, so also they broadened the whole horizon of human thought. "Nothing stirs man like the expansion of the horizon of his life. It seems to lift humanity bodily to a higher platform, and to give it the command of a wider world." Peter Martyr writes to a friend at the time: "I feel a wonderful exultation of spirits when I converse with intelligent men who have returned from these regions. It is like an accession of wealth to a miser. Our minds, soiled and debased by the common concerns of life and the vices of society, become elevated and ameliorated by contemplating such glorious events."

But America was not the only new world of that time. Europe itself was a new world, just formed, with a new people inhabiting it, full of youthful vigor, ready to work out a new civilization, and having ready at hand the material out of which that new civilization was to be made. Fifteen years after the discovery of America, science takes its *first* great step in advance when Copernicus con-

ceives that theory of the solar system which for thirty-six years he does not venture to publish. Ten years later still, Luther takes the first effective steps toward bringing back to the knowledge of the world the real religion of the New Testament. From this point, however, we must return to trace another movement of scarcely less importance.

CHAPTER XI.

THE GROWTH OF COMMERCE AND ITS RESULTS.

AT no time had commercial intercourse between the different parts of Europe, or between Europe and the countries of Asia, been wholly wanting. But during the age of the greatest darkness and insecurity, when the knowledge of luxuries, and, indeed, when men's needs and desires were of the scantiest sort, and when roads and bridges had fallen into decay, and all the means of communication were of the rudest, this intercourse was comparatively insignificant. Before the era of the crusades it had begun to increase, and had grown to considerable importance and value.

As early as the time of Charlemagne there was a much-used commercial route from Germany to Constantinople through the country of the Avars. During the same period a considerable trade existed between Flanders and England. The foundation of the future commercial importance of Venice was firmly laid by the end of the eighth century,

and there is very strong evidence that the Arabs had extensive commercial relations with the countries on the Baltic and North Seas, by way of the Caspian and the Volga, earlier than the eleventh century.

The crusades, however, imparted to commerce a new impulse, as we have already seen, and from this time its development was constant and rapid.

In the home trade of Europe, the chief interchange of commodities was between the widely different countries of the South and the North. In the South the cities of Italy controlled the trade with the Eastern world, which was then the source from which came many articles of use and almost all articles of luxury and adornment. Such articles, from India and the farther East, were brought into Europe along a great variety of routes, from the most northern, which passed north of the Caspian Sea, to the most southern, through Egypt. The cost of sending goods over these different routes varied widely with the length of the overland passage and the number of necessary transfers. The frequency with which any one route was used, however, depended almost wholly on the political situation in the Greek empire, in the Mahometan states lying on the Mediterranean, or in the inland states. During all the early part of this period the routes which reached the Black Sea were the most frequented. The decided advantage which Genoa finally gained in the Black Sea virtually drove Venice to the southern and really more *profitable* routes. From this time dates the com-

mercial decline of Genoa and the supremacy of Venice. Besides bringing silks from the East, Italy soon began to manufacture them for herself. In the twelfth century this manufacture had been introduced into Sicily as a result of Norman conquests in Greece. In the fourteenth century the manufacture became general in Italy, and silks were also produced in Catalonia, and at Lyons in France.

In return for the silks and spices brought from the South, the North had to offer her two great staples—cured fish and wool, together with woolen goods. To these should be added furs from the more distant North. Wool was the chief export of England. Woolen goods were manufactured largely in the Low Countries, and linen in the north of France.

The entire voyage from the South to the North and return was too extensive for the cautious navigators of those days to undertake in one season, and so it was divided, the ships from the more distant North meeting those from the South in the Netherlands and there making their exchanges. At first Bruges was the depot for this traffic, and afterward Antwerp.

Besides the commerce by sea, there was a rapidly increasing land trade. The merchant set out from the town, with his pack of goods upon his back, to supply the wants of the surrounding country, as had been done in far earlier times, or it might be the *caravan of merchants*, who had banded together, *carrying their goods* in wagons, and, perhaps, having

force enough to attempt the defense of them against the robber knights who might attack them, for many of the inferior nobility were no more than highwaymen; they lived "by the stirrup," and were continually lying in wait to deprive the merchant of his hard-earned wealth. The goods which they carried out from the cities the merchants exchanged, among the people living remote from the towns, for money or, more commonly, for peltries and all sorts of country produce, which they brought back to the cities in the same way. Often to the ladies, shut up to a monotonous life in the isolated castles of knights or nobles, it gave interest and variety to the day, when the peddler arrived with his gay cloths to be displayed, or, perhaps, with carefully concealed and cautiously produced gems and jewelry.

Besides the land trade of this sort, overland lines of commerce existed between the cities of Italy and those of Germany, and between the western parts and the country of the Danube and Constantinople.

The increase of commerce by sea, and the rise of new nations eager to take part in it, led to those important maritime discoveries which mark the closing period of the middle ages. The Portuguese, rising in commercial activity, found the usual routes to India closed against them by the cities of Italy; but they were not to be thus shut out from the land which all must reach who would grow rich by commerce. Under the intelligent patronage of Prince Henry, who had nobly conceived the mission of a prince to be to advance the interests of mankind in

difficult undertakings which would hold out no promise of profit to tempt the enterprise of private men, they ventured by degrees along the coast of Africa, and, finding it not so dangerous as superstitious fable would make it seem, they discovered at last its southernmost point, named it, in their gladness, the Cape of Good Hope, and pushed on to India. Spain sent a little expedition toward the west, to reach the same necessary goal—an expedition from which she did not hope for much—and stumbled upon a new world.

But the important results of the development of commerce are not to be found alone in the enlarging of geographical knowledge, and in the more complete satisfaction of man's material needs. The results which followed in the political sphere may be justly called a revolution.

With the increase of commerce, wealth accumulated in the towns, the natural centers of trade, and, with the growth of wealth, the desire for security and civil order naturally grew stronger, and, at the same time, the means of attaining it increased. By arms, by skillful negotiation, or by outright purchase, the cities gained for themselves one right after another from their feudal lords. Whether actually little independent states, owing merely a nominal dependence on the emperor, like many cities of Italy and Germany, or never having advanced so far as this, like the cities of France, they all acquired self-government in internal matters. *They became little* republics governed by self-*elected officers,* representative councils, and public

assemblies of all the citizens, the latter meeting in the market-places at the sound of the bell.

Such an extensive movement as this rise of the free cities could not take place without an important bearing on all the other parts of society. On the peasant and serf classes the influence was in the highest degree beneficial. By bringing money into more common use, the cities made possible a regular system of money payments for rents on the one side and for wages on the other. Out of this, also, could develop a system of definite contracts for labor and pay, and altogether the change was of very great advantage to the laboring classes, as furnishing a substitute for the vague uncertainties of the feudal claims and tenures. The cities also afforded places of refuge, into which the serf might escape, and where he might hope for security and the gradual improvement of his lot. So commonly did this occur that the regulation of it forms one of the most frequent subjects of agreement between the cities and the lords. The usual arrangement entered into was that, after the serf had remained a year and a day in the city without being recovered, the lord then lost all his rights over him and he became a free man.

With the feudal nobility the cities were almost constantly in conflict. Though, no doubt, very much assisted in their rise by the fact that the forms of the feudal system allowed so much of local independence, the cities, as centers of commerce, were opposed to the spirit and results of feudalism, to the local and fragmentary condition of things

which it perpetuated. The rights, too, which they possessed, could be protected and increased only at the expense of the nobles. Their influence, therefore, was wholly against the feudal system, and counted for something in the general struggle against it.

In many cases the free cities formed great organized leagues to protect themselves against their noble enemies, and to look after their common commercial interests. The League of the Rhine embraced sixty cities at the middle of the thirteenth century. More famous was the League of the Swabian cities in the following century. But most important and most widely extended of all was the Hanseatic League, organized some time during the thirteenth century, of which Lübeck was the leading city. This league finally came to control the commerce of the whole north of Europe, and grew to sufficient military and naval power to sweep the seas of pirates, and to wage successful war upon kings.

The monarchs very early recognized in the cities their natural allies against the feudal system, and though no formal alliance might be entered into between them, and though very possibly the kings did not deliberately encourage the growth of the cities with a view to raising up a power in the state able to outbalance the nobles, still they were not slow to avail themselves of all the incidental advantages which the rise of such a power offered. *The greatest* permanent gain which the rise of the *cities brought to* the kings was no doubt found in

the increase of wealth which enabled them to introduce a regular system of taxation as a substitute for the feudal services on which they had been formerly obliged to depend.

Linked so closely as it is with the line of political development, we shall have occasion to notice, under that head, some further results of the spread of commerce and the increase of wealth.

CHAPTER XII.

THE RISE OF THE NATIONS.

ONCE more, and this time under more favorable circumstances, nations begin to arise in Europe. The days of anarchy and isolation are coming to an end, and there are now—created by the crusades, the revival of learning, the spread of commerce, and other forces which we have pointed out—general ideas and common sentiments enough to enable a central government to exert a genuine control over its territory and to unite its people together in a common organization.

In England, Norman and Saxon have at last, after three centuries, united into one people; the Norman has become an Englishman. What we may call a new language, also, has been formed, by introducing many words from the Norman French and by dropping many of the old English inflections. In this new language Chaucer has written a happy introduction to the great volume of English litera-

ture which the future is to produce. In a series of glorious foreign wars in Wales, in Scotland, and in France, the new people have found a source of national pride and patriotism, and at home they have fairly begun that struggle for constitutional liberty in which their victory was to be for all mankind.

In France the Capetian kings, by long-continued efforts, have been undermining the feudal system and centralizing the power more and more in their own hands. A national cause—the cause of independence against the English, whose victorious invasion has placed the English king upon the throne of France, and driven the rightful heir of the crown a fugitive from his capital, and, by the heroic efforts which all classes have been called upon to make, the people have become more closely united in feeling than ever before. By the end of the fifteenth century the process of union and centralization has gone so far that the King of France, Charles VIII., can lead a national expedition out of the kingdom in the hope of foreign conquest.

In Spain, the feeling of patriotism had early arisen on account of the continuous wars with the Arabs, and the religious character of these wars had seemed to invest the feeling with an additional sacredness. The numerous little Christian states which arose during the long struggle for the recovery of the peninsula had been gradually absorbed by two, Aragon and Castile. By the union of these on *the marriage of* Ferdinand and Isabella, and by the *conquest of* Granada, the last Moorish kingdom,

which followed in 1492, Spain was united under one government and the nation was given a definite shape. And here, also, the union which had been formed at home, and the settlement of domestic difficulties, enabled the nation, or its rulers, to turn their attention to foreign political interests, and these interests of the kings of Spain speedily came into collision with those of the kings of France. Then were made the first moves in that long game for European supremacy between France and the House of Austria, made by Ferdinand the Catholic, and, we may almost say, made with a definite knowledge of what the game was to cost.

But from these more fortunate lands of Europe, in which national governments were forming, we turn to Germany and Italy to behold a different picture. Over these countries, as we have seen, a brilliant but empty theory still held sway and prevented the organization of national states—in Italy by rendering it impossible for any central power of national origin to arise, in Germany by withdrawing the attention of those who should have been her national rulers to personal interests foreign to the state, and so allowing the power of the nobles to increase, and the feudal system to fasten itself permanently upon the land. The brilliant reign of the Emperor Frederick II., in the first half of the thirteenth century, may be taken as an extreme illustration of this fact, and, perhaps, as marking the point at which the feudal division of the country becomes permanent and the independence of the great vassals legal and complete. To

the mind of Frederick, who had been educated in the polished civilization of Sicily, Germany seemed coarse and rude, and during the thirty most important years of his reign he visited it but once. His most important connection with it was in two decrees, by which the temporal and spiritual princes were rendered independent within their territories of the imperial jurisdiction. It is due to the Holy Roman empire that the first hopeful movement toward organizing a national government—a government in reality, and not merely having a name to be—for either of these countries has been made in our own times. In Italy, however, if a national government was impossible, at least a national language arose, and was made glorious by Dante and Petrarch and Boccaccio.

In the kingdom of Sicily there was at one time much promise of a prosperous and highly civilized state. Founded on a combination of Greek, Saracen, and Norman elements, a brilliant and luxurious civilization very speedily arose, a literature began about the court of the Emperor Frederick II., and a national life seemed about to be created; but, in the terrible days which attended and followed the fall of the Hohenstaufen family, all hope of such a happy result was extinguished.

Included in this political movement are two others of no slight significance, and having important consequences. The one is the fall of feudalism as a political organization, the other is the development of the representative system.

We have already noticed many of the causes which led to the decline of feudalism. We propose here to take a more complete and systematic view of that movement as a whole.

With the growth of common ideas and general interests the work of the feudal system was done. It had carried society over from the time when disorganization was so complete that no government could be the expression of a national life to the time when national governments were possible and actual. Europe had once needed it, and used it, but now it could no longer maintain its hold upon society as a whole. Everything that was looking to the future, and to new progress, began to see in it an obstacle in the way which must be overcome; like a tool no longer of use, it must be thrown aside. But, as is the case with all institutions which have been once of general value, it had become firmly grounded, and the effort to overthrow it must be long-continued and desperate. Indeed, in some places it succeeds in maintaining itself; and wherever it thus survives after its work is finished, it becomes, according to a well-known principle or a law of history, a source of evil, a serious obstacle in the way of progress.

The crusades struck the first blow at the feudal system, in ways already indicated, by reducing the relative wealth and importance of the feudal noble, and by bringing many an estate into the hands of the successful burgher; by creating in the nobles themselves a taste for a social life, which could not be satisfied on their isolated estates, and so bring

ing them within the dazzling influence of the royal courts, where titles and decorations formed but a poor substitute for the real power which the monarchs were winning from them; and, not least of all, by the fact that the crusades—a great common movement from common impulses and motives, and directed to a common end—created general ideas and a common life.

The development of commerce—by accumulating wealth, and, with wealth, power in the cities—raised up a strong class opposed to feudalism and ready to support the monarchs with resources against it. Accumulations of money rendered possible regular systems of taxation, and these in turn rendered possible the organization of standing armies. The standing army enabled the monarch to dispense with the military support to be derived from the feudal system, and, since the standing army could be kept permanently in the field, it possessed a great advantage over the temporary levies of any feudal noble.

The coming into use of gunpowder, also, had much to do with this process. With fire-arms in his hands, the common foot-soldier became at once the equal of the mounted knight, and the baron's castle, however inaccessible and strongly fortified, could not be made proof against artillery and mining.

In the case of France, where the process of overthrow was most systematic, there must be added the long continued and, on the whole, wisely directed efforts of the monarchs to recover their power from the hands of their vassals.

In general, the feudal system, as a political institution, as a system of isolation, comes to an end before the end of the middle ages. In Germany even, where it had strengthened itself by imperial decrees, and where it had resulted in the establishment of a number of small but sovereign and independent states, its development went no further. The rulers of these small states were generally successful in preventing any disintegration of their territories by their own vassals, and commonly succeeded in establishing centralized and, later, absolute governments.

It must be borne in mind here that the feudal system, whose overthrow we have outlined, is the feudal system as a form of organization for society, as a substitute for national governments; not that system of social distinctions and hated legal privileges which is sometimes spoken of as the feudal system. The monarchs, in their endeavor to win real power from the nobles, were glad to let these distinctions of rank and these exemptions and privileges, based as they were upon the feudal organization of society, remain in force, and they did not scruple even to strengthen and add to them. So that, while the feudal system as a means of organization was overthrown, the feudal system as a legalized social institution, as a system of caste and privilege, became more and more oppressive and iniquitous, till the fearful outburst of the French Revolution was necessary to sweep it out of existence.

We have already seen, in the chapter on Commerce, the rise of the free cities, and some of the effects which it produced. We have to notice here another result which followed in the political sphere from the accumulation of wealth in the cities, and the consequent desire of the kings to share in that wealth by taxing it. This was the development of a political institution which the ancient world had not known, but which has played a most important part in the creation of modern liberty—the representative system.

The monarchs, anxious for money, found it necessary to obtain the consent of the cities to the imposition of a tax, or, at least, the citizens were more ready to pay a tax to which they had given their consent. To obtain this consent, their representatives were summoned to meet with the nobles, lay and ecclesiastic, in the diets, or estates-general, of the kingdoms.

It is possible that the use of representation was suggested by the councils of the Church, in which the principle had begun to be employed very early —representatives of the churches assembling to decide for all upon points of doctrine or of practice, or it may have been derived from the judicial and administrative practice common among the German nations of having chosen men under oath to represent the whole community. The early representatives of the cities, however, can hardly be called representatives in our present sense of the word. *They were rather* deputies for a certain definite object *than general* representatives.

In a few states this plan was introduced in the twelfth century, but it was most generally adopted in the thirteenth. From considering the subject of taxation the representatives passed, by gradual steps, to the discussion of the objects for which the money so raised was to be employed, and so on to the general interests of the state and to questions of government.

On the Continent this developed no true representative system of permanence. In England, however, it did, and, from the results there gained by a slow but almost uninterrupted growth, modern nations have borrowed their free constitutional governments, whether republican or monarchical in form.

One chief reason for the different result in England in this respect is to be found in the different relation to the citizen class in which the feudal nobles there found themselves placed. William the Conqueror had observed in France too many of the difficulties—he had never been extremely careful himself to smooth away such difficulties — into which the feudal system brought the kings to be willing to have them repeated in his own experience when he became king of England. Accordingly, when he divided up the forfeited lands of the Saxons among his followers, he introduced two important modifications of the usual practices of the feudal system.

In the first place, when he bestowed upon any one a large holding, he distributed it, with few exceptions, in different places over his kingdom, a

part in one place and a part in another, instead of giving it in a single continuous area. He thus prevented the consolidation of the fief about some local center as a little independent principality within the realm.

In the second place, he compelled all the subordinate vassals, of whomsoever holding their lands, personally to take an oath of fidelity to himself in addition to the oath sworn to their own immediate lords. Upon the Continent it was generally the practice for the immediate vassals of the monarch alone to take the oath of fidelity to him, this being supposed to cover, also, their vassals, who themselves swore fidelity only to their immediate lord. By this innovation William secured a direct and personal claim upon every holder of a feudal estate. William also retained in his own possession, as royal domains, much larger estates than he granted to any single vassal.

As a result, the king became the strongest power in the state. The struggle which took place in England was not, therefore, like that on the Continent—a struggle on the part of the kings to win back their powers from their vassals, to change theoretical into actual prerogatives, but it was a struggle of the barons to win rights and privileges from the kings. In this struggle the nobles found their natural allies in the citizen class, and the alliance here was between nobles and people against the kings, and not between kings and people against the nobles, *as it may be* considered to have been upon *the Continent.*

This is well illustrated in the Magna Charta, won from King John in 1215, the first document of the English constitution, in which privileges and rights are won for noble and commoner alike. It is illustrated, also, by the fact that the first Parliament, in which the representatives of the citizen class sit in deliberation with the nobles, is that summoned in December, 1264, by Simon de Montfort, chief of the insurgent barons.

This can not profess to be a full statement of the complex reasons why liberty was gained in England and not upon the Continent. We will pause to mention here only one other of the more important reasons. It is the fact, alluded to elsewhere, that in England the original Teutonic germs of liberty were left to develop in their own way, free from any decisive influence of foreign, and especially of Latin, ideas. This is especially noteworthy in the sphere of law. But the history of the struggle for English liberty, unfinished as it was at the end of the middle ages, hardly falls within our plan.

The final outcome of this movement is, that on the Continent the success of the cities and the kings meant that the old theories, which had always granted extensive prerogatives to the kings, were now to become living and actual facts, mere theories no longer; it meant the transfer of the powers, which the lords had exercised, to the kings more powerful now than any lord had been, and against whom the uncombined cities had no resource. On the other hand, in England, success meant the

steady winning from the kings of more and more rights and privileges for the lords and for the people. Therefore, we have growing up on the Continent, in the next ages, the absolute monarchies in which popular liberties are extinguished, while in England grows up a limited monarchy, which finds its strongest support in the willing consent of a free people.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CHURCH AND THE REFORMATION.

THE causes which brought about these great changes in the political and intellectual spheres could scarcely fail to produce corresponding movements in the religious world. This advance toward liberty, which began, at least, in so many countries of Europe, must have its influence on ecclesiastical as well as on political government; these national governments, organized at last, must speedily begin to be jealous of papal interference within their domains; and this increase of learning and widening of men's thoughts must have its effect on their understanding of spiritual truth. Accordingly, we find a twofold movement taking place within the Church—on the one side aiming at the modification of the ecclesiastical government of the world, and on the other at the modification of the doctrinal belief and the religious life.

The papacy reached the highest point of its *combined ecclesiastical* and political power during

the reign of Innocent III., from 1198 to 1216. The mere list of what he was able to accomplish will indicate this power. He granted to four princes, in different parts of the world, the right to assume the title of king. He became the feudal lord of England by the act of King John, and of Aragon by the act of Peter II., and received the homage of the latter monarch in person. He forced the unwilling king of France — Philip Augustus, up to this time the most powerful of the Capetian kings — to take back his discarded wife. In Germany he twice decided an imperial election, and deposed Otto, whose election he had at first secured. By proclaiming a crusade, he rooted out the heresy of the Albigenses, a most formidable rebellion against the papal power, and he saw there the beginning of the Inquisition, which was to be such a terrible engine of ecclesiastical tyranny in time to come. He secured for the papacy a most thoroughly organized and devoted army by recognizing the foundation of the two orders of mendicant friars—the Dominicans and the Franciscans. Finally, he recognized the establishment of the Latin empire of the East, which the Fourth Crusade, diverted from its original purpose, had founded on the ruins of the Greek empire, and which seemed for a moment, by bringing the Greek Church into relations with him, to promise the union of all the Christian world under the supremacy of the Pope. With so much of real success as this, it will be easily understood that his claims to *universal* supremacy were not moderate.

From Boniface VIII., who filled the papal throne a century later—from 1294 to 1303—we have, if anything, still higher claims and pretensions. But there is now less probability of success. The progress in the century between Innocent and Boniface has not been small. The enemies, from whom is to come the opposition to papal claims, are stronger and more numerous. The people, the clergy even, as was the case in France in the contest between Boniface and Philip IV., are ready to support the monarchs and the national cause in opposition to the papacy. Excommunication and interdict have lost their terrors. Boniface fails to make good his pretensions, and after him the decline of the papal power is rapid.

The seventy-two years of the "Babylonish captivity," as it was called, follow immediately upon the death of Boniface. During this period Avignon, a town on the Rhone belonging to the popes, but surrounded by French territory, was the capital of the ecclesiastical world, and the popes were under the control of the kings of France. This could not fail to bring the papacy into suspicion as a mere tool of the French monarchs, and to undermine the respect which the office commanded in other states. At the end of this period came the Great Schism, when rival popes at Rome and at Avignon anathematized each other and divided the allegiance of Europe. This, in its turn, weakened the theory of the one visible representative of the Church universal, upon which the papal position was based, and forced upon Europe the necessity of reform.

In the great and influential university of Paris, and elsewhere as well, grew up the idea of reformation by means of General Councils, great assemblies, which, as representing the entire Church, would be under the especial guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and would rightfully possess a power superior to that of the Pope. It seemed for an instant as if the government of the Church was about to be changed from an absolute monarchy into a constitutional monarchy, in which the law-giving power should be a regularly recurring representative assembly, having the power even to depose the monarch.

The Council of Constance seemed to meet, in 1414, under the fairest auspices. The existence of three popes, each claiming to be the rightful head of the Church, made it necessary, beyond dispute, for this one council at least, to exercise the right of deposing a pope and appointing a successor. It seemed to be within its reach to reform the whole ecclesiastical system, and to provide for free development within the national churches, presided over by a papacy of limited powers and by periodical General Councils—to organize, as it were, a great federal ecclesiastical state. But it made the fatal mistake of giving itself a master, by choosing a pope in the place of those deposed, before it had rendered certain the means of reformation and of the future government of the Church. The newly chosen pope, Martin V., was able to divide the council, and to make separate arrangements with the different interests represented there. The at-

tempt at ecclesiastical reformation failed, and the papacy came out from this time of trial with the loss, indeed, of that political control over Europe at which earlier popes had aimed, but with a more secure absolutism in ecclesiastical matters than ever before. The great danger to the Church, which came through Luther's rebellion, strengthened this power still more; the Council of Trent, where only papal legates had the right of proposing resolutions, illustrates its growth; and the dogma of papal infallibility, which our own time has seen proclaimed, is only the logical outcome of the failure of the Council of Constance.

The corresponding movement in spiritual matters, in doctrinal belief and religious life, comes more slowly, reaches its climax a century later, and succeeds; but it succeeds only by means of a revolution which rends in pieces the visible unity of the Church.

At no time during the middle ages is an understanding of true Christianity entirely wanting. Single men, and bodies of men, are scattered along the line, in whose hearts still burns a spark of genuine faith which superstition and ignorance have failed altogether to quench. As we approach the end of the middle ages, the number and influence of these men rapidly increases. Differing though they may from each other, and from the later Protestants in many points, they can be counted as nothing less than a promise that the knowledge of a purer Christianity shall at some time be restored to men.

We can only notice very briefly the more important of those attempts to live and to teach a better Christianity, which preceded the Reformation.

During the twelfth century the Waldenses arose in northern Italy and eastern France, and, at about the same time, the Albigenses in southern France. These sects differed from each other and from the Protestants upon many questions, but still they had some points in common with each other and with Protestantism. The Albigensian movement must be regarded as an attempt to introduce a purer Christian life and practice, rather than a better theology. In theology, it was rather a return to old heresies. The Waldenses united with a simple Christian life the earnest study of the Bible, and an assertion of the right of every man to study, interpret, and teach the words of the Gospel.

In England, in the last half of the fourteenth century, Wycliffe "disowned and combated almost every distinguishing feature of the mediæval and papal Church, as contrasted with the Protestant." He proclaimed the supreme authority of the Holy Scriptures, and translated the Bible into English. Wycliffe escaped the penalties of too free thought only by the personal protection of persons high in the state. His own dead body, his written words, and his followers suffer fiery persecution in the years that follow.

But the seeds which he had scattered were winged seeds, and some of them took root in far-off Bohemia. John Huss, in the first part of the

fifteenth century, almost reproduced in Bohemia the teachings and influence of Wycliffe, and dared to maintain, in the face of the Council of Constance, his right to his own belief against the authority of the council. This reforming council, with an inconsistency perfectly natural and to be expected, condemned him to the stake, and his effort, also, notwithstanding the heroic struggles of his followers in Bohemia, met with the failure which was as yet inevitable.

Other movements of these later centuries almost equally deserve mention. One of them, that of the German Mystics, had a more direct influence on the mind of Luther, especially through the works of John Tauler, and the little book called the German Theology, than any of the others had.

The reason why Luther succeeded while all the others failed is to be found in the progress which had taken place in the century between Huss and himself. The invention of the printing press alone is almost sufficient to account for the different result. Luther could sow Europe broadcast with his fiery pamphlets, and find readers for them everywhere. They penetrated in large numbers even into Italy and Spain.

The increase of learning was another great reason of his better success. Two lines of study, inseparably connected then as always—history and philology—were of especial value in determining the success of the Reformation. By the study of philology, the original documents of the faith, the New Testament, and the works of the early fathers,

were put within the reach of all in critical and trustworthy editions. By the study of history, having at its command this vastly improved material, and directed by the new critical spirit, primitive Christianity stood revealed to the sight of the student in contrast with the accumulated traditions of the Church. As early as 1440 Laurentius Valla had turned the engines of the new historical criticism against the fable called the "Donation of Constantine," and had made any further defense of it impossible. In 1506 Reuchlin published his Hebrew Grammar; and Erasmus, the great scholar of the day, had done something more than make all Europe ring with laughter at the ridiculous follies of monks and priests. He had published critical editions of a number of the early fathers of the Church, and in 1516 appeared his edition of the Greek New Testament, the first one published in the West, for which he had carefully edited the text, and to the text he had added notes explaining the changes he had made in it, and the reasons for them, and also a new Latin translation. We may almost say that without this, certainly without something like it, Luther's work could not have been so complete as it was.

The Reformation fitly marks the close of the middle ages. Looked at from one point of view, it may be rightly called the last event of mediæval history; looked at from another point of view, it may be as rightly called the first event of modern history. On the one hand, it marks the culmina-

tion of all the movements which bring the middle ages to an end. On the other hand, from it have proceeded influences and forces which have, in important respects, shaped modern history.

Considered in itself, the Reformation was primarily and chiefly a religious event. This was its motive, this was the aim of the reformers, this its inner significance. Looked at in this way, the Reformation means a return to primitive Christianity. It means that ignorance and superstition have been so far subdued that the new Barbarian tribes, and all the diverse elements which composed mediæval Europe, have been so far united and molded into one that all may now unite together in a new growth toward the understanding of true religion. If any one should venture to say that the corruptions and misunderstandings of Christianity that fill the dark ages were necessary to save it from the certain destruction which would have overtaken a pure and spiritual Christianity, then the time had now come when the saving work of such misunderstandings was finished, and when a return to a better Christianity was possible.

Luther restores Christianity from works to faith, from justification by penances and ceremonies and doctrinal beliefs to justification by faith in a personal Saviour, out from which proceed good works as the necessary and certain fruits.

It is not meant that this was a final step in the growth of an understanding of Christianity, that now was reached a complete and perfect understanding, which was never hereafter to be lost and

never hereafter to be enlarged. It is meant that here is taken one, and that the first, great step in this understanding; that the work of Luther brings out the fundamental truth of Christianity—forgiveness of sin through the work of a personal Saviour—in such a way that as an historical fact, the mind of humanity has never again lost sight of it to such an extent as it had lost sight of it in the times preceding Luther.

In the second place, the Reformation is a proof that, in one important respect, the work of the middle ages has been accomplished. There is now a Christendom. Europe is a common whole. All its diverse elements have been absorbed into an organic unity, an organic being, through all whose arteries there flows a single historic current. It has now a common life, a common thought, common aspirations. This the Reformation proves; without it the Reformation could not have been.

It has been said that the Reformation is a German event, and Protestantism a product of the German mind. This is so far true as it means that the German mind is peculiarly fitted to understand Christianity and to keep in sight its fundamental truths, but as an historical fact in regard to the Reformation it can scarcely mean so much as this even. The pre-reformation movements in France and Italy, the success of the Reformation in France, its promise of success in Italy and Spain, the fact that it failed in these countries not so much because it had none or but few adherents—though, perhaps, it did not take the strong hold upon the

popular mind in these countries that it did in Germany—as because it was crushed out by overwhelming force, its failure for similar reasons in southern Germany, its long struggle in England against like obstacles—these facts indicate that the Reformation was not a matter of races and nations, but a European movement. The reason why it succeeded where it did and failed elsewhere is to be found primarily in the political situation of things, and only in a secondary degree in any mental or spiritual race characteristics.

But the religious feature of the Reformation does not exhaust its meaning. By the opposition which he met, Luther was forced into a position which it is possible he might not otherwise have taken. He was obliged to maintain the right of private judgment, the right of each individual to examine the grounds of a belief, and to come to a decision for himself under no responsibility to any human tribunal. On the platform in that great debate at Leipzig it was not merely Luther who stood upon one side and Eck upon the other; it was also the past, with its absolute authority and its infallible dogma, against the future, with its free thought and free investigation. Ignorance and bigotry long maintain their hold upon the minds of men, and Protestantism has been often untrue to itself; but henceforth, wherever Protestantism has realized its own character and been self-consistent, there has been found free thought and freedom of belief and expression.

Such is the character of the Reformation as the

close of mediæval times. In a word, it indicates that the unifying and absorbing process of that time is so far finished that all can now unite in a common movement—a movement not now, as at the time of the crusades, led by common impulse and common passion, but one led rather by common knowledge and by common thought; it indicates that learning has advanced far enough to restore to Europe the primitive understanding of Christianity, and, by proclaiming the right of private judgment, it declares its alliance with the future.

It does not belong to my task to trace the direct and indirect influence of the work of Luther and of Calvin on the religious, political, or scientific development which followed the Reformation. To do that would be to write a considerable part of the history of civilization during modern times.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONCLUSION.

WE have now completed our survey of the period of mediæval history. We began with the Roman empire, which had collected within itself all the results of ancient civilization. Its own contributions in law and government and material products, all that Greece had gained in thought and science and art, the moral teaching of the Hebrew race, and the great promise of Christianity—all these were

united together into one common civilization by the Roman empire. Rome had broken down all the barriers of the ancient world and had founded a great unity—founded it, to be sure, upon force rather than upon ideas, but, nevertheless, it had brought men to realize the common humanity of all; it had made men citizens of the world, and had formed the scattered nations into one vast society.

Of this society Christianity had gradually taken possession. From its little beginning in Judea it had slowly spread over the Roman empire until, before mediæval history opens, it had become the state religion. In this process it had become somewhat corrupt and formal. It had lost sight of its real spiritual meaning and had become a system of external worship and belief; but it had also obtained a compact organization, which was to give it great power and make it one of the great historic forces of the future.

Upon this society, the larger part of it powerless and without hope, bursts the storm of Barbarian invasion. The German tribes from the North are to bring in the new force, the new blood and energy, which is to transform this old civilization into a new and better one. But for the moment it seems as if they had brought only destruction and anarchy and confusion. The old civilization is destroyed, and there is nothing to take its place. The old government is overthrown, and there is no general government to succeed it. The whole is *broken* up into fragments, which know but little of

each other, and have but little in common. It is a serious question whether this fragmentary condition of things will not be a permanent one; whether a great unity of mankind will ever again be possible, with common ideas and interests and a common working together. But the answer is found, where it must be found if at all, in that which the old had produced.

Two forces immediately seize upon the newcomers and bring them into subjection to the society which they have conquered. One of these is "the shadow of the Roman name," that awe of the Eternal City and its dominion which compels them to feel their own inferiority, which makes them believe that no strength of their human hands can overthrow that divine empire made for all time. With all that they may do, they are still its subjects.

The other is the Christian Church, which, with its strong organization and with its lofty and unyielding authority, compels them to a crude obedience, forms a new and real unity, and establishes a common bond between them.

These forces hold the new, fragmentary society together, and prevent its final disintegration; but they can not form a basis on which a new civilization can be erected. That can only be furnished by some power which shall give the necessary civil order and security.

But the Barbarian invasions are hardly over before a great genius arises who promises, for a moment, to supply all this. Inheriting a strong king-

dom from his father, he pushes his conquests in in all directions, until his dominions almost or quite equal those of the old Roman empire of the West. But not his dominions merely, but all his plans justify him in reviving for himself the title of emperor of Rome. He gives to the West order and good government. He attempts to make this good government permanent by well-organized, administrative, legislative, judicial, and educational systems. He unites Europe together once more under a strong government, and that in the middle of the period of confusion, and so strengthens the forces that are creating a common Europe. But his work can not be permanent; the disintegrating forces are still too strong, and his empire falls to pieces.

For centuries yet no thorough general government is possible. Only for an instant, in two or three places—in France, in Germany, and in England—is there a hope that nations may be organized. But nowhere are these hopes fulfilled. They are as yet premature. The feudal system, embodied in forms which have been handed down to it from the past, takes possession of society, with its legalization of disunion, its apotheosis of the individual. But it keeps up the forms of a common organization, it keeps alive the theory of a general government, and it furnishes a sort of barbarous civil order to society till something better can be obtained.

But the time of better things is speedily coming on. The great era of the crusades begins. Impelled by a mighty religious motive, army after

army of the best soldiers of the West pours into the Holy Land to meet certain destruction. The cost in life and time and treasure is enormous. But these are not all spent without return. The mind of Europe is aroused, and begins to seek the light. Commerce increases; wealth accumulates; a political development is rendered possible, and the feudal system is weakened. The cost of the crusades is great, but they start Europe on a new era of progress—a progress that was slow at first, taking a century or two, perhaps, for a single step, but the progress of civilization is an accelerated motion, and the lightning advances of later days are rendered possible only by the slow but steady motion of earlier times.

The mind of Europe once aroused is an eager and an active mind. But it has, at first, no material to use and no guide to direct it. It can do nothing, for a time, but turn all its energies toward abstruse questions of dogma, toward minute speculation. But, little by little, it receives instruction, it gains in knowledge. It finds schools and schoolmasters among the Arabians; it founds the universities; it multiplies the subjects of study; by degrees it enters into its inheritance from the ancient world of philosophy, of science, of history and literature; a new class of learned men arises, outside the Church; the printing press begins its work; thought is broadened; superstitions are destroyed; time-honored fables are overthrown; a simpler Christianity is restored to men.

Commerce, too, increases. It finds out new paths

for itself; it sends its adventurous explorers into every sea; it opens a new world to the awakened energy of Europe. Wealth increases; the condition of the lower classes is improved; a middle class begins; the free cities arise and make their power felt; feudalism falls; central governments come into being; a system of international politics begins; the representative system is found out, and the cause of political liberty wins its first victories.

Then, too, the increasing knowledge and experience of men begins to act against the power of the monarchical church which had been created by the statesmanship of Gregory VII. Excommunication and interdict lose their terrors; the new national governments assert their independence; the dangerous idea grows up that the head of the Church may be made subject to a General Council, that the government of the Church may be made a limited monarchy, with a representative assembly. The papacy escapes this danger, and, on the other hand, strengthens its absolute ecclesiastical power against every attempt to limit it. But the political power it had been striving to gain is no longer possible, and rebellions against it in the sphere of the religious life grow more and more frequent and formidable, until this period of the world's history ends in the Reformation.

The Reformation, as a great movement of the European mind, is a result of the progress that has taken place since the crusades along all these various lines. It restores to mankind the primitive

Christianity, it establishes the right of free thought, and it begins the history of modern civilization.

Such, in brief outline, is the period whose history we have followed. It is clearly enough a transitional era. It can point to no great contribution of its own to the permanent civilization of mankind. Shall we except the Roman Catholic Church? But certainly the Roman Catholic Church, in so far as it is a distinctly mediæval creation, is no important contribution to the permanent civilization of the race. No great work of to-day is building upon it as there is upon the scientific work of the Greeks, or upon the gospel of John. It was a scaffold, erected that the building might go on, but no stone itself wrought into the walls. It is so of the middle ages as a whole. There is but little of actual building, though there may be some; but there is much erecting of scaffolding, and collecting together of material, and preparing of tools.

Let us not, however, upon this account, look upon the middle ages as a period of no worth in human progress. It was no slight work, it was a most important work, to take all the various and hostile peoples of the fifth century and mold them together into a common unity, to form from all those different and jarring elements a common civilization, to preserve the gains which the ancient world had labored for and won, to save society from the dangers which threatened it through a permanent reign of ignorance and anarchy. These labors may not be, indeed, foundations upon which

we are now building, but without them we should not build at all.

And the men of those days, too, ignorant and narrow-minded and rude though they were, were not monsters. They were men of like passions with ourselves, and the gloomy annals of those days are touched with brightness upon every page by the human joys and hopes and pleasures, the simple virtues, the earnest thoughts, the noble lives of men who lived and did their work in what we are pleased to call the dark ages.

We may, in fact, find many lessons for ourselves and our more rapid civilization in those narrow lives; and we should remember that it was the forgotten labors of those men that prepared for us the achievements and the opportunities of to-day.

THE END.

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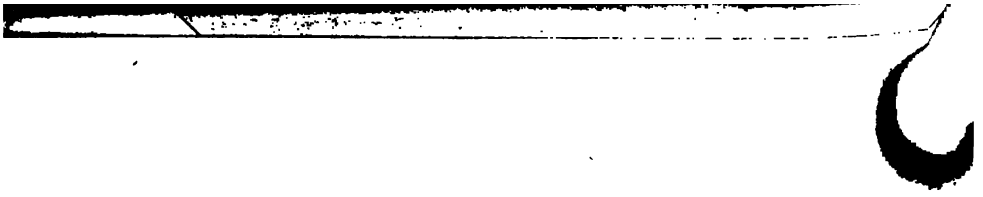

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